THE ADVANTAGE AND NECESSITY OF THE CHRISTIAN REVELATION,

SHEWN FROM THE

STATE OF RELIGION IN THE ANTIENT HEATHEN WORLD:

ESPECIALLY WITH RESPECT TO

THE KNOWLEDGE AND WORSHIP OF THE ONE TRUE GOD:

A RULE OF MORAL DUTY:

AND

A STATE OF FUTURE REWARDS AND PUNISHMENTS.

TO WHICH IS PREFIXED,

A PRELIMINARY DISCOURSE ON NATURAL AND REVEALED RELIGION.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

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M DCC LXIV.

PREFACE

TO THE

SECOND VOLUME.

ALTHOUGH in the general preface prefixed to the former volume, I have given an account of the nature and deſign of this work, yet I think it not amiſs to ſay ſomething farther in the beginning of this volume, for removing or obviating ſome prejudices, which might be conceived againſt the plan I have formed, and the manner in which it is executed.

Some learned perſons ſeem not willing to admit, that the main principles of religion and morality were originally communicated by Divine Revelation to the firſt parents of mankind, and from them conveyed by tradition to their poſterity. They think it more probable, that they were led by their own natural ſenſe and reaſon to the knowledge of thoſe principles. I readily own, that thoſe principles, when once diſcovered, will be found upon examination to be perfectly agreeable to the beſt reaſon of mankind; but I think enough is offered in this treatiſe to ſhew, that in fact the firſt notices of theſe things were communicated to the firſt anceſtors of

the human race by a revelation from God. And in this I have the ſatisfaction of agreeing with many eminent divines, and with thoſe two great maſters of reaſon, and who are juſtly reckoned among our beſt writers on the law of nature, Grotius and Puffendorf. The ſuppoſing the knowledge of the main principles of religion to have been originally owing to a Divine Revelation, does not at all deny that thoſe principles are really founded in the nature of things, and confirmed by the dictates of pure and unprejudiced reaſon. Theſe things are perfectly conſiſtent; and when taken together, give one a more extenſive view of the wiſdom and goodneſs of God in his diſpenſations towards mankind, and the various ways that have been taken for leading men into the knowledge of religion and morals. That this is moſt agreeable to the Moſaic accounts, is ſufficiently ſhewn both in the former volume and in this. And that there were very antient traditions among the Heathen nations, concerning ſome of the main principles of religion, though in proceſs of time greatly depraved and corrupted, appears from the accounts that are given us by the Heathen writers themſelves.

But there is another objection which I have met with, and which deſerves to be more particularly conſidered. It is this, That the making ſuch a repreſentation, as I have done, of the ſtate of the Pagan world, may poſſibly be turned to the diſadvantage of natural religion itſelf, and may tend to the weakening thoſe principles which lie at the foundation of all religion and morality.

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If by natural religion be meant religion as it is founded in nature, and which may be proved to be agreeable to the beſt and ſoundeſt principles of human reaſon, there is nothing in this work that can bring any real prejudice to it. And though I am far from thinking that the Goſpel is merely a republication of the law of nature, yet this may be ſafely affirmed, and is what I have endeavoured in the courſe of this work to ſhew, that it is one excellent deſign of the Chriſtian Revelation to confirm and eſtabliſh it, to place it in the propereſt light, and to clear it from that amazing load of rubbiſh which had been heaped upon it in a long ſucceſſion of ages. No-where is natural religion, taken in the ſenſe I have mentioned, ſo well underſtood, ſo clearly explained, and ſo ſtrongly aſſerted, as where the Chriſtian Religion is duly entertained and profeſſed.

But if by natural religion be underſtood religion as it ſtands merely on the foot of the powers of unaſſiſted reaſon, entirely independent on Divine Revelation, and as it was actually taught and profeſſed by thoſe who made the higheſt pretences to reaſon and religion in the Pagan world, I confeſs it has been one principal part of my deſign in this work to ſhew its weakneſſes and defects. And as a high admiration of the antient philoſophers, eſpecially thoſe who flouriſhed in the celebrated nations of Greece and Rome, has inſpired many with a contempt of the Holy Scriptures, and cauſed them to entertain mean and undervaluing thoughts of the glorious Goſpel of Chriſt, I cannot but think it a real ſervice to religion, to ſhew how unfit thoſe boaſted lights

lights of the Pagan world were to be the guides of mankind; and that they fell vaſtly ſhort of the firſt teachers and publiſhers of Chriſtianity, mean and illiterate as ſome have eſteemed them.

The Scriptures make the moſt ſtriking repreſentations of the darkneſs and corruptions of the Heathen world. And the antient apologiſts for Chriſtianity give the ſame account of the ſtate of the Pagan nations. They ſet themſelves to expoſe their groſs idolatry and polytheiſm, the impurities and abomihations of their religion and worſhip, their great corruption and diſſoluteneſs of morals, and the uncertainties and contradictions of their beſt writers, and thence argue the great need there was of the uſefulneſs and neceſſity of the Chriſtian Revelation, and the advantage it was of to mankind. And whoever would have a juſt and full view of the ineſtimable benefits and privileges we are made partakers of by the Goſpel, ought by no means to loſe ſight of this.

It is not the intention of any thing that is ſaid in this book to degrade and vilify human reaſon, as if it were of no uſe in religion, and only fit to lead men aſtray. I am fully perſuaded that reaſon, duly exerciſed and improved, is very friendly to religion and morals: and that the main principles of the Chriſtian religion, if ſet before men in a proper light, will approve themſelves to right reaſon, when freed from vicious and ſinful prejudices. It is by reaſon that we are enabled to detect falſe revelations, and to diſcern the proofs and evidences of the true, and the glorious characters of wiſdom and goodneſs, of purity and truth, which ſhine

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in it. But I confeſs I am far from conceiving ſo high an opinion of reaſon, if left merely to itſelf in the preſent ſtate of mankind, as ſome have entertained of it. I am fully convinced by arguments drawn from undeniable fact and experience, that reaſon, when puffed up with a preſumptuous conceit of its own ability and ſtrength, and neglecting or deſpiſing proper aſſiſtances, or when boldly intruding into things too high for it, or led aſide by corrupt cuſtom and mere human authority, by vicious prejudices and paſſions and carnal intereſts, is often apt to paſs very wrong judgments on things, eſpecially in divine matters. Nor do I apprehend, that it is any diſparagement to reaſon, to lay open the faults and errors of thoſe who have made the greateſt pretenſions to it; or that it follows from this, that reaſon is a vain thing, and has no certain foundations to rely upon. Thus, e. g. if ſome that have profeſſed to govern themſelves by reaſon, have entertained very wrong notions of God, of his perfections, attributes, and providence, it by no means follows, that the proofs of the divine nature and perfections, or of God's governing providence, are not built upon ſure and ſolid grounds, or that reaſon is not able to diſcern the force of thoſe proofs, when clearly ſet before it. In like manner with regard to morals, it would be wrong to conclude that there is no certainty in any moral principles, becauſe ſome perſons of great name have paſſed very falſe judgments in matters which appear to be of great importance in morality: or that there is nothing baſe or deformed in vicious actions or affections, becauſe in ſome nations and ages, and in the opinion of perſons pretending to ſuperior wiſdom, they have been regarded

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as matters of indifferency, and as either no faults at all, or very ſlight ones.

In the courſe of this work, eſpecially in that part of it which relates to the ſtate of morality in the Heathen world, I have been under a neceſſity of taking notice of ſeveral things which can ſcarce be mentioned without being offenſive to virtuous minds, though frequently practiſed among thoſe that have paſſed for the moſt learned and polite of the Heathen nations, and even by many of the philoſophers themſelves. The ſubject was ſo diſagreeable to me, that I intended more than once to have paſſed it over altogether, or to have mentioned it very ſlightly, and only in a general way. But what determined me to inſiſt upon a full proof was, that otherwiſe the charge might have been looked upon to be groundleſs and calumnious. And not only have ſome real friends to Chriſtianity attempted to clear them from it, but others of a different character have taken occaſion to cenſure the apoſtle Paul, as having made an unjuſt and odious repreſentation of the ſtate of the Gentile world, beyond what can be juſtified by truth and fact. The proofs I have brought are from the antient Heathen writers themſelves, and not from any Chriſtian authors, except as far as they are ſupported by the former. Nor can I think there is any danger of what ſome good perſons might poſſibly be apprehenſive of, that this might tend to diminiſh the horror of vices, which are juſtly accounted moſt deteſtable and odious. The only inference that can juſtly be drawn from it is, that the biaſs of corrupt cuſtoms, and vicious appetites and paſſions, are

apt to over-rule the moral ſentiments of the human mind, and tend to ſtifle the remonſtrances of conſcience, and even to bribe reaſon to judge too favourably concerning practices which it would otherwiſe reject with abhorrence. It alſo ſhews, that a Divine Revelation, and an expreſs law of God, enforced by the ſtrongeſt ſanctions, may be of great uſe in point of morals, even with reſpect to the reſtraining men from thoſe things, the evil and turpitude of which ſeem to be moſt apparent to reaſon and nature. Notwithſtanding the corruptions that have prevailed among many who have taken upon them the name of Chriſtians, and which ſome have taken pains to exaggerate, the moſt abominable vices have been far from being ſo general among them, as they were in thoſe that have been eſteemed the moſt refined nations of Paganiſm. It is not to be doubted, but that vaſt numbers of thoſe who believe the Goſpel have been and are preſerved by the purity of its precepts, and the power of its ſanctions, from vices to which otherwiſe they would have given a boundleſs indulgence. Nor can any who believe the Chriſtian religion allow themſelves in vicious practices, without ſinning againſt the cleareſt light, and breaking through the ſtrongeſt engagements. I do not ſee, therefore, how they can be accounted real friends to the purity of morals, who are for taking away or diminiſhing the force of thoſe motives and ſanctions which the Goſpel propoſes, and which, where they are really believed, tend both to animate good men to a holy and virtuous practice by the moſt glorious hopes and proſpects, and to deter the wicked from their evil courſes by the moſt amazing denunciations of God's righteous vengeance.

When we conſider the ſtrange fluctuations of perſons of the greateſt abilities in the Pagan world, with reſpect to ſeveral important points of religion and morality, and to the retributions of a future ſtate, it ought ſurely to make us highly thankful that we have a written well-atteſted Revelation in our hands, to which we may have recourſe, both for aſſiſting us to form a right judgment in matters of the greateſt conſequence, and for regulating our practice. And it has pleaſed God in his great wiſdom and goodneſs to eſtabliſh its divine authority by ſuch an abundance and variety of proofs, as are every way ſuitable to the importance of the caſe, and are amply ſufficient to engage though not to conſtrain the aſſent. Chriſtianity is not afraid of the light, or of a free and impartial examination and inquiry. It has always met with the beſt reception from thoſe who have examined it, in the integrity of their hearts, with that ſeriouſneſs and attention which the great importance of it well deſerves. Let us therefore, with minds freed as far as poſſible from vicious prejudices, conſider the nature and excellency of the Chriſtian religion, the ſpirituality and heavenlineſs of its doctrines, the diſcoveries that are there made to us of thoſe things which it is of the higheſt concernment to us to know, eſpecially relating to the wonderful methods of the Divine Wiſdom and Grace for our redemption and ſalvation, the unqueſtionable excellency of its morals, and purity of its laws, the power of thoſe motives by which the practice of them is enforced, and the admirable tendency of the whole to promote the glory of God, and the cauſe of righteouſneſs, piety, and virtue in the world: let us then make proper reflections on the holy and

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ſpotleſs life, and moſt perfect and ſublime character of the great Founder of our religion, and alſo on the character of his diſciples, who publiſhed it to the world in his name: that they appear to have been perſons of great probity and ſimplicity, incapable of carrying on an artful impoſture, or of being themſelves the inventors of that ſcheme of religion which they taught, and which was contrary in ſeveral inſtances to their own ſtrongeſt prejudices: nor is there any thing in their whole temper and conduct, in the doctrine they preached, or in the manner of propagating it, that ſavours of the views of worldly policy, or that is cunningly accommodated to humour men's prejudices and vicious paſſions, and gratify their ambition and ſenſuality. But eſpecially let us conſider the illuſtrious atteſtations given from heaven to the divine miſſion, both of the firſt Author and publiſhers of the Chriſtian religion, by a ſeries of the moſt wonderful works, done in expreſs confirmation of the religion they taught, and which manifeſtly tranſcended all human power or ſkill, and bore the evident tokens of a divine interpoſition: and that the truth of theſe facts is aſcertained to us with all the evidence that can be reaſonably deſired in ſuch a caſe, and which, all things conſidered, is as great as could be expected concerning any facts whatſoever done in paſt ages. To all this may be added the evidence ariſing from clear and expreſs prophecies, relating to events which no human ſagacity could foreſee, ſome of them undeniably delivered and committed to writing many ages before their accompliſhment, and yet in due time punctually fulfilled. All theſe are of great force, even ſeparately conſidered; but when viewed and taken together in

their juſt connection and harmony, form ſuch a chain of proofs, as carries a mighty force of conviction with it to an honeſt and unprejudiced mind, that is animated with a ſincere love of truth. The advocates of Chriſtianity have frequently urged theſe arguments with great clearneſs and ſtrength; and whilſt theſe proofs continue firm, and the original facts are well ſupported, the truth and divine authority of the Chriſtian religion ſtand upon ſolid and immoveable foundations. Nor ſhould we ſuffer prejudices ariſing from the ill conduct of many of its profeſſors and teachers, or from ſome particular paſſages of Scripture hard to be underſtood, or the difficulty of comprehending ſome of its doctrines which relate to things of a very ſublime and myſterious nature, at all ſhake our belief of true original Chriſtianity. It is a rule laid down long ſince by Ariſtotle, and the juſtneſs of which has never been controverted, that we ought not to expect in all things the ſame kind of evidence, but in every thing to content ourſelves with ſuch proofs as the nature of the ſubject will bear. To inſiſt upon mathematical demonſtration in matters of religion and morality, is perfectly abſurd and unreaſonable; and yet the evidence may be ſuch as is ſufficient to produce a certainty, though of another kind, and which may very fully ſatisfy the mind, and make it reaſonable for us to give our aſſent to it, notwithſtanding ſome objections that may be made againſt it, and from which ſcarce any truth is entirely free.

I ſhall on this occaſion conſider a pretence that has been often made uſe of by men of ſceptical minds, that without an abſolute certainty

certainty (which they pretend is not to be had in what relates to religion) they may reaſonably and ſafely withhold their aſſent. But ſuch perſons ought to conſider, that if there be a probability on the ſide of religion, though ſhort of an abſolute certainty, this would induce an obligation upon them to receive it, and to govern their temper and conduct by the rules it preſcribes. Where a thing appears to be probable, i. e. that there is more reaſon for it than the contrary, this does not leave the mind in a perfect equilibrium, and at liberty abſolutely to ſuſpend its aſſent if it be a matter of ſpeculation, or to abſtain from acting if it be a matter of practice. This the Pyrrhoniſts, who carried ſcepticiſm to the greateſt height, were ſenſible of, and therefore would not allow that any one thing is more probable than another; which ſeems to me to be one of the greateſt extravagancies that any man pretending to reaſon can be guilty of; nor do I believe that any one man, whatever he might pretend in words, could really bring himſelf to think ſo. Thoſe of what was called the New Academy, though at the bottom little better than ſceptics, ſaw the abſurdity of this, and therefore though they would not acknowledge a certainty, yet allowed a probability in things; and if they had purſued this conceſſion to its genuine conſequences, it would have ſubverted the ſcheme they had in view of a perpetual ſuſpenſion of aſſent. It is an undeniable maxim, that we ought to follow evidence as far as it appears to us, and that therefore that which is probable ought to ſway our judgment, and influence our practice, according to the meaſure of its probability, and the preponderancy of the reaſons which are brought for it. It is manifeſt.

manifeſt to every one that has any knowledge of mankind, that it is probability which generally governs our conduct, if we act prudently; and that the Author of our beings deſigned it ſhould be ſo. We are ſo conſtituted, that in almoſt all caſes relating to practice, we are obliged to follow what appears to us upon a proper conſideration of it to be moſt probable; and for any man wilfully to neglect a thing which would probably be of great advantage to him, or to do any thing which probably will expoſe him to great loſs and damage, would be juſtly deemed a very fooliſh and unreaſonable conduct, and in matters where duty is concerned a very guilty one. Some of thoſe who were otherwiſe much addicted to ſcepticiſm in ſpeculation, have yet acknowledged, that in the affairs of common life, people ought to follow probable appearances. And if this is to be done in what relates to our preſent temporal intereſt and advantage, why not in that which relates to our higheſt happineſs? The more important any affair is, and the greater the danger is in neglecting it, or the damage to be ſuſtained by ſuch a neglect, the more we are obliged, by the ſoundeſt maxims of reaſon and good ſenſe, to govern ourſelves, and act according to what appears to us upon a diligent enquiry to be moſt probable. And what reaſon can be aſſigned, that we ſhould not act ſo in matters of the greateſt conſequence, and in which our everlaſting ſalvation appears to be nearly concerned? In caſes of this nature, if the hazard be vaſtly greater on one ſide than on the other, all the rules of prudence leads us to take that part, which has the leaſt hazard attending it, even though the evidence on that ſide ſhould be ſuppoſed to be no greater, or perhaps

perhaps ſomething leſs, than on the other. But when both the evidence is much ſtronger on one ſide, and at the ſame time the hazard men run by rejecting it much greater, to take that ſide which is both leſs probable and more dangerous, would be the moſt fooliſh and inexcuſable conduct in the world.

If therefore, upon a fair enquiry, there is at leaſt a great probability that the Chriſtian Revelation came from God, it is both our wiſdom and duty to embrace it, and to govern ourſelves by its excellent rules. No man in that caſe could run a hazard by embracing the Goſpel, or at leaſt a hazard in any degree equal to what he would expoſe himſelf to by rejecting it. Let us ſuppoſe that by complying with the terms of ſalvation which are there propoſed, he ſhould deny himſelf ſome of thoſe liberties which he would otherwiſe indulge, and controul his paſſions by the Chriſtian rules, which do not require us to extirpate the paſſions and appetites, but to govern and keep them within the bounds of moderation and temperance, this is no more than the wiſeſt men have adviſed as the propereſt way for ſecuring a man's own tranquillity, and for preſerving body and ſoul in a right temper. In other caſes, men think it reaſonable to hazard ſome preſent loſs, and to undergo ſome preſent hardſhips and inconveniencies, on the probable proſpect of avoiding a much greater evil, or procuring ſome valuable and ſuperior advantage. But when the advantage propoſed is ſo infinitely great as the rewards promiſed to good men in the Goſpel, and the evils ſo great as the puniſhments there denounced againſt the obſtinately impenitent and diſobedient,

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it ought certainly to have proportionably a more powerful influence.

I hope every reader that brings with him a mind ſincerely diſpoſed to know the truth and follow it, will join with me in earneſt ſupplications to God, who is a lover of truth and holineſs, that he would be graciouſly pleaſed to clear our minds from vicious prejudices, and diſpel the clouds of ignorance and error, that we may receive the truth in the love of it, may behold it in its convincing light, and feel its transforming power, and may bring forth fruits ſuitable to it in a holy and virtuous life, to the glory of God, and our own eternal ſalvation.

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The ſentiments of thoſe who are accounted the beſt of the Pagan moral philoſophers conſidered. They held in general, that the law is right reaſon. But reaſon alone, without a ſuperior authority, does not lay an obliging force upon men. The wiſeſt Heathens taught, that the original of law was from God, and that from him it derived its authority. As to the queſtion, how this law comes to be known to us, they ſometimes repreſent it as naturally known to all men. But the principal way of knowing it is reſolved by them into the mind and reaſon of wiſe men, or, in other words, into the doctrines and inſtructions of the philoſophers. The uncertainty of this rule of morals ſhewn. They talked highly of virtue in general, but differed about matters of great importance relating to the law of nature: ſome inſtances of which are mentioned. p. 119

CHAP. VIII.

Epictetus's obſervation concerning the difficulty of applying general preconceptions to particular caſes, verified in the antient philoſophers. They were generally wrong with reſpect to the duty and worſhip

worſhip proper to be rendered to God, though they themſelves acknowledged it to be a point of the higheſt importance. As to ſocial duties, ſome eminent philoſophers pleaded for revenge and againſt forgiveneſs of injuries. But eſpecially they were deficient in that part of moral duty which relates to the government of the ſenſual appetites and paſſions. Many of the philoſophers countenanced by their principles and practice the moſt unnatural luſts and vices. Thoſe of them that did not carry it ſo far, yet encouraged an impurity inconſiſtent with the ſtrictneſs and dignity of virtue. Plato very culpable in this reſpect, ſo alſo were the Cynics and Stoics. Simple fornication generally allowed amongſt them. Our modern deiſts very looſe in their principles with regard to ſenſual impurities. p. 132

CHAP. IX.

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CHAP. X.

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far, as to be in ſome inſtances not properly conſiſtent with a humane diſpoſition and a charitable ſympathy. They ſaid fine things concerning forgiving injuries and bearing with other men's faults. But in ſeveral reſpects they carried this to an extreme, and placed it on wrong foundations, or enforced it by improper motives. This is particularly ſhewn with regard to thoſe two eminent philoſophers Epictetus and Marcus Antoninus. The moſt antient Stoics did not allow pardoning mercy to be an ingredient in a perfect character. p. 183

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CHAP. XII.

The Stoics profeſſed to lead men to perfect happineſs in this preſent life, abſtracting from all conſideration of a future ſtate. Their ſcheme of the abſolute ſufficiency of virtue to happineſs, and the indifferency of all external things, conſidered. They were ſometimes obliged to make conceſſions which were not very conſiſtent with their ſyſtem. Their philoſophy in its rigour not reducible to practice, and had little influence either on the people or on themſelves.

themſelves. They did not give a clear idea of the nature of that virtue which they ſo highly extolled. The looſe doctrine of many of the Stoics, as well as other philoſophers, with regard to truth and lying. p. 229

CHAP. XIII.

The nations were ſunk into a deplorable ſtate of Corruption, with regard to morals, at the time of our Saviour's appearing. To recover them from their wretched and guilty ſtate to holineſs and happineſs, one principal end for which God ſent his Son into the world. The Goſpel Diſpenſation opened with a free offer of pardon and ſalvation to periſhing ſinners, upon their returning to God by faith and repentance, and new obedience: at the ſame time the beſt directions and aſſiſtances were given to engage them to a holy and virtuous practice. The Goſpel ſcheme of morality exceeds whatſoever had been publiſhed to the world before. A ſummary repreſentation of the excellency of the Goſpel precepts with regard to the duties we owe to God, our neighbours, and ourſelves. Theſe precepts enforced by the moſt powerful and important motives. The tendency of the Goſpel to promote the practice of holineſs and virtue, an argument to prove the Divinity of the Chriſtian Revelation. p. 253

PART III.

CHAP. I.

The importance of the doctrine of a future state. It is agreeable to right reason. The natural and moral arguments for a future state of great weight. Yet not so evident, but that if men were left merely to their own unassisted reason, they would be apt to labour under great doubt and difficulties. A Revelation from God concerning it would be of great advantage. p. 295, 296

CHAP. II.

Some notions of the immortality of the soul and a future state obtained among mankind from the most antient times, and spread very generally through the nations. This was not originally the effect of human reason and philosophy, nor was it merely the invention of legislators for political purposes; but was derived to them by a most antient tradition from the earliest ages, and was probably a part of the primitive religion communicated by Divine Revelation to the first of the human race. p. 303

CHAP. III.

The antient traditions concerning the immortality of the soul and a future state became in process of time greatly obscured and corrupted. It was absolutely denied by many of the philosophers, and rejected as a vulgar error. Others represented it as altogether uncertain, and having no solid foundation to support it.

The

The various and contradictory sentiments of the philosophers concerning the nature of the human soul. Many of the Peripatetics denied the subsistence of the soul after death, and this seems to have been Aristotle's own opinion. The Stoics had no settled or consistent scheme on this head: nor was the doctrine of the immortality of the soul a doctrine of their school. A future state not acknowledged by the celebrated Chinese philosopher Confucius, nor by the sect of the learned who profess to be his disciples. p. 314

CHAP. IV.

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CHAP. V.

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things of future happineſs, conſidered it as confined chiefly to perſons of eminence, or to thoſe of philoſophical minds, and afforded ſmall encouragement to the common kind of pious and virtuous perſons. The rewards of Elyſium were but temporary, and of a ſhort duration: and even the happineſs of thoſe privileged ſouls, who were ſuppoſed to be admitted not merely into Elyſium, but into heaven, was not everlaſting in the ſtrict and proper ſenſe. The Goſpel doctrine of eternal life to all good and righteous perſons was not taught by the antient Pagan philoſophers. p. 360

CHAP. VI.

Thoſe that ſeemed to be the moſt ſtrenuous advocates for the immortality of the ſoul and a future ſtate among the antients, did not pretend to any certainty concerning it. The uncertainty they were under appears from their way of managing their conſolatory diſcourſes on the death of their friends. To this alſo it was owing, that in their exhortations to virtue they laid little ſtreſs on the rewards of a future ſtate. Their not having a certainty concerning a future ſtate, put them upon ſchemes to ſupply the want of it. Hence they inſiſted upon the ſelf-ſufficiency of virtue for complete happineſs without a future recompence: and aſſerted, that a ſhort happineſs is as good as an eternal one. p. 380

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Our Lord Jeſus Chriſt brought life and immortality into the moſt clear and open light by the Goſpel. He both gave the fulleſt aſſurance of that everlaſting happineſs which is prepared for good men in a future ſtate, and made the moſt inviting diſcoveries of the nature and greatneſs of that happineſs. The Goſpel alſo contains expreſs declarations concerning the Puniſhment which ſhall be inflicted upon the wicked in a future ſtate. The neceſſity and importance of this part of the Goſpel Revelation ſhewn. The concluſion, with ſome general reflections upon the whole. p. 442

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THE

ADVANTAGE AND NECESSITY

OF THE

CHRISTIAN REVELATION,

SHEWN FROM THE

State of Religion in the antient Heathen World.

PART II.

Relating to a Rule of Moral Duty.

CHAP. I.

Man appears from the frame of his nature to be a moral agent, and deſigned to be governed by a law. Accordingly, God hath given him a law to be the rule of his duty. The ſcheme of thoſe who pretend that this law is naturally and neceſſarily known to all men without inſtruction, contrary to fact and experience. Yet there are ſeveral ways by which men come to a knowledge of this law, and of the duty required of them; viz. by a moral

ſenſe implanted in the human heart; by a principle of reaſon judging from the natures and relations of things; by education, and human inſtruction: beſides all which, God hath made diſcoveries of his will concerning our duty, in a way of extraordinary Divine Revelation.

HAVING conſidered the ſtate of the antient Heathen Nations, with reſpect to the knowledge and worſhip of the one true God, and ſhewn the need they ſtood in of an extraordinary Divine Revelation, to recover them from that amazing ignorance of God, and that idolatry and polytheiſm, into which they were fallen; I now proceed to the next thing I propoſed, which was to conſider the ſtate of the antient heathen world with regard to a rule of moral duty.

That it is of great importance to mankind to have clear directions given them concerning moral duty in its juſt extent, and to have it enforced upon them by a ſufficient authority, and by proper arguments and motives, is evident to a conſidering mind. And many have been of opinion, that this is ſo manifeſt and obvious to natural reaſon, that there is no need of Divine Revelation, either to teach men their duty, or to enforce upon them moral obligations. This ſeems to have a plauſible appearance, if we conſider the matter abſtractly, and in a way of ſpeculation. But the ſureſt way of judging of it is from fact and experience: for if it appears that in fact the moſt knowing and civilized nations in the heathen world, and the wiſeſt and ableſt men among them, have laboured under great uncertainties, and even fallen into dangerous

dangerous errors with regard to ſeveral important branches of moral duty; and that they have alſo been greatly deficient in the propoſing ſuch motives, as might be moſt proper and efficacious for enforcing the practice of it; this affordeth a ſtrong preſumption of the weakneſs of human reaſon in this reſpect, when left merely to itſelf in the preſent ſtate of mankind: and that an expreſs Revelation from God, both for inſtructing us in moral duty in its juſt extent, and enforcing it upon us by the moſt powerful motives, would be of the greateſt advantage to mankind.

To prepare our way for a due conſideration of this ſubject, it will be proper, in the firſt place, to offer ſome general obſervations concerning man as a moral agent, and concerning the ſeveral ways by which he may be ſuppoſed to come to the knowledge of his duty.

That man is a moral agent, the proper ſubject of moral government, is as evident as that he is a reaſonable creature, or that he is capable of virtue and vice, praiſe and blame. And whatever ſome perſons may diſpute in a way of ſpeculation, moral or free agency, though it may be difficult to ſettle the preciſe metaphyſical notion of it, or to anſwer all the objections which ſubtil and ſceptical men may form againſt it, is what all men are intimately conſcious of. The ſelf-approving and ſelf-condemning reflections of a man's own mind plainly ſhew it to be ſo. God hath not only given man a body, and animal powers and inſtincts, ſuited to the uſes and enjoyments of the animal and ſenſitive life, but he hath made him capable of diſcerning the moral differences

of things, and hath given him a ſenſe of good and evil, right and wrong, a ſelf-determining and a ſelf-reflecting power, whereby he is capable of chuſing and acting for himſelf, and of paſſing a judgment on his own actions. There are few, but have had experience of an inward ſelf-approbation or diſapprobation, ariſing from the workings of a conſcious principle within, according as they have been ſenſible of their having performed their duty or the contrary. And God's having made them creatures of ſuch a kind, i. e. reaſonable and moral agents, capable of a ſenſe of moral obligation, is a demonſtrative proof, that he deſigned them to be governed in that way, in which it is fit for moral agents to be governed; i. e. by giving them laws to be the rule of their duty. And if God hath given men laws, it muſt be his will that thoſe laws ſhould be obeyed; and as a wiſe and righteous moral governor, he will deal with them agreeably to the laws which he hath given them, and will reward or puniſh them according to their obedience or diſobedience to thoſe laws.

But ſince no law is obligatory, except it be promulgated, and in ſome way publiſhed to thoſe who are to be governed by it, we may reaſonably conclude, that if God hath given a law to mankind, which they are obliged to obey, he hath not left them under an invincible ignorance of that law, but hath made ſuch diſcoveries of it to them, that if it be not their own fault, they may know what that duty is which God requireth of them, as far as it is neceſſary for them to do ſo.

Some

Some have carried this ſo far as to aſſert, that all men have a natural knowledge of the whole of their duty by an intimate conſcious perception, and an inward univerſal light, independent of all outward teaching. To this they apply that paſſage of Lucan,

" ——— nec vocibus ullis
" Numen eget, dixitque ſemel naſcentibus auctor
" Quicquid ſcire licet."

As if God dictated to all men from their very birth, the whole of what is neceſſary for them to know with regard to their duty, ſo that they ſtand not in need of any farther vocal or verbal inſtruction. This ſeems to have been Lord Herbert's ſcheme, and is that of Dr. Tindal, in his famous book, intituled, " Chriſtianity " as old as the Creation." Lord Bolingbroke frequently expreſſes himſelf to the ſame purpoſe. He ſays, that " natural Revelation " (as he calls it) produces a ſeries of intuitive knowledge from " the firſt principles to the laſt concluſions (*a*)." Where he ſuppoſes, that both the firſt principles of the law of nature, and all the concluſions drawn from them, are intuitively and infallibly known to every man. Accordingly he declares, that " it is a " perpetual ſtanding Revelation always made, always making, " to all the ſons of Adam," and affirms, that " it is intelligible " at all times and all places alike, and proportioned to the " meaneſt underſtanding (*b*)." Or, as he elſewhere has it, " The

(*a*) Bolingbroke's Works, Vol. IV. p. 276. edit. 4to.

(*b*) Ibid. p. 92. 94. 96, 97.

" tables

" tables of the natural law are ſo obvious to the ſight of all men, " that no man who is able to read the plaineſt characters can " miſtake them (*c*)." According to this ſcheme, there is not the leaſt need of any extraordinary external Revelation. And it would equally prove, that all the endeavours of philoſophers, moraliſts, and legiſlators, to inſtruct mankind in matters of morality, were perfectly needleſs and ſuperfluous. I have already offered ſome conſiderations to ſhew the abſurdity of this ſcheme (*d*): and the following treatiſe will contain the fulleſt confutation of it; by which it will appear how prone mankind have always been to miſtake the law of nature, in very important inſtances of moral duty. It is indeed ſo contrary to the experience and obſervations of all ages, that one would be apt to wonder that any men of ſenſe ſhould inſiſt upon it: and yet the ſame pretence is ſtill repeated by the enemies of Revelation. And ſome others of a different character have expreſſed themſelves very inaccurately and unwarily on this ſubject.

But though this pretence of the univerſal clearneſs of the law of nature to all mankind, independent of all farther inſtruction, cannot be admitted, as being contrary to the moſt evident fact and experience, yet it muſt be acknowledged, that a great deal hath been done in the courſe and order of Divine Providence, to lead men into the knowledge of the duty required of them.

(*c*) Bolingbroke's Works, Vol. V. p. 153.

(*d*) See the firſt volume of this Work, Preliminary Diſcourſe, p. 7, 8.

And

And 1. There is a moral ſenſe implanted in the human mind, which, if duly cultivated and improved, might be of great uſe for leading men, in many inſtances, to the notion and practice of moral duty. I know this is a point that has been conteſted, and I ſhall not here enter into the debate. But it ſeems to me, that ſomething of this kind, by whatſoever name it is called, muſt be admitted. Whoſoever carefully examines his own heart, will be apt to think that there are moral feelings, diſtinct from mere reaſoning, which incline him to certain ways of acting; and that the mind of man is ſo conſtituted, as to have an inward ſenſe of moral beauty or deformity in affections and actions, which, when the human nature is in its right ſtate, carries him to delight and take a complacency in ſome actions as right and fit, beautiful and lovely, and to diſlike and diſapprove the contrary. Some traces of this are to be found in the human mind, even in its moſt degenerate ſtate, and which can ſcarce ever be utterly eraſed. As there are natural inſtincts diſtinct from reaſon, which tend to the preſervation and convenience of the animal and vital frame, ſo there ſeem to be inſtincts of a moral kind, or propenſions and inclinations, which, when duly regulated and improved, are of conſiderable uſe for leading men to a proper courſe of action. Such are the ſocial and kind affections, ſo natural to the human heart, that they have obtained the name of humanity, and which ſhew that men were born not merely for themſelves, but were deſigned by the author of their beings for mutual aſſiſtance, and the offices of benevolence.

But

But then, for preventing miſtakes in this matter, there are ſeveral things proper to be here obſerved. One is, that this moral ſenſe is not of equal ſtrength and force in all men. It is moſt conſpicuous and eminent in ſome noble and generous minds, in which a kind of natural propenſity to juſtice, benevolence, gratitude, &c. remarkably appears, and powerfully operates: and in others it is ſo weak, as ſcarce to be perceived, or is overpowered by vicious habits and corrupt affections and appetites. It muſt be acknowledged on the one hand, that the moral ſenſe is capable of being improved and ſtrengthened by reaſon and reflection: and that on the other hand, it may be greatly perverted and depraved by vicious cuſtoms, inordinate luſts, and ſelfiſh intereſts, by falſe judgments of things, and evil examples. And I think it cannot be denied, that it is ſo much weakened in the preſent ſtate of the human nature, that it is no way fit to be alone a ſufficient guide in morals, but ſtandeth in great need of farther direction and aſſiſtance. Some have carried their notions of the extent and efficacy of this moral ſenſe beyond what reaſon and experience will warrant. The ingenious and polite Earl of Shaſteſbury, after having obſerved, that there is a natural beauty of actions as well as figures, adds, that "no ſooner are actions viewed, no ſooner the "human affections and paſſions diſcerned (and they are moſt of "them diſcerned as ſoon as felt) than ſtraight an inward eye di-"ſtinguiſhes, and ſees the fair and ſhapely, the amiable and ad-"mirable, apart from the deformed, the foul, the odious, and deſ-"picable." This is elegantly expreſſed: but I ſhould think, that any one who impartially conſiders human nature, as it appears in the generality of mankind, muſt own that the inward eye, the eye of

the mind, is now very much vitiated and obſcured, and that there are many things which hinder its juſt diſcernment. The experience of all ages ſhews, that men have been generally apt to miſtake idolatry and ſuperſtition, than which nothing in the opinion of this noble author can be more odious and deſpicable, for the moſt amiable thing in the world, true religion and piety. And even with reſpect to the duties men owe to one another, and the government of their own affections and paſſions, how often have they been miſtaken in their notions of the fair, the amiable, and admirable, apart from the foul and deformed, the odious and deſpicable? The cuſtom of expoſing weak and helpleſs children, which, one ſhould think, is contrary to the moſt intimate feelings of humanity, obtained very generally among the moſt civilized nations; and yet they do not appear to have been ſenſible that in this they acted a wrong and inhuman part, but rather looked upon it to be a prudent and juſtifiable practice. The various tribes of American ſavages, whom ſome have recommended as following the genuine dictates of nature, are ſo far from feeling any remorſe for the moſt cruel inſtances of revenge on their enemies, or thoſe who, they think, have injured them, that they rejoice and glory in them as the nobleſt exploits, and both applaud themſelves, and are applauded by others, on the account of them. Many other inſtances of the like kind might be mentioned, ſome of which I ſhall have occaſion to take notice of in the courſe of this work. It is not therefore a rule to be depended on, which ſome have laid down, that no man can violate the law of nature without condemning himſelf. The pleaſure or remorſe men feel in their reflections on their own actions, is far

from being a ſure mark and criterion of the moral goodneſs or evil of an action in the preſent ſtate of mankind. It is true, that the mind is naturally carried to approve what it takes to be right and fit, and praiſe-worthy, and to diſapprove and condemn what it takes to be baſe and wrong; but then, in many inſtances, it ſtands in need of direction and inſtruction as to what is right and wrong. And when it is well informed, then it is that it is fitly qualified to approve and condemn in the proper place. It appears, therefore, that what is called the moral ſenſe was not deſigned to be an adequate guide in morals; nor is it alone conſidered, and left merely to itſelf, fit to have the ſupreme direction as to the moral conduct. It never was intended to preclude the neceſſity of inſtruction, but to be an aſſiſtant to our reaſon, to incline the mind more readily to its duty, and produce a complacency in it; and to create a diſlike and abhorrence of that which is evil and baſe, and to reſtrain us from committing it.

This leads me to obſerve,

2dly, That there is in man a principle of reaſon, which is deſigned to preſide over the propenſions and affections, and to direct the moral temper and conduct. Man has an underſtanding given him, by which he is capable of enquiring into the natures and relations of things, and conſidering what thoſe relations require. And whatſoever clearly appeareth from the very nature and relations of things to be fit and right for reaſonable creatures to perform, we may juſtly conclude, that it is the will of God who conſtituted that nature and thoſe relations they ſhould perform;

and when once it is conſidered as the will of God, the ſupreme univerſal Lord and moral governor, then it is regarded not merely as fit and reaſonable in itſelf, but as a divine law, in the ſtricteſt and propereſt ſenſe.

This way of diſcovering our duty by ſearching into the nature and relations of things, when rightly performed, is of great extent. It ſignifies, that we muſt form juſt and worthy notions of God, and of his glorious attributes and perfections, and the relations between him and us: that we muſt know ourſelves, and the frame and conſtitution of our own natures, as alſo the relations we ſtand in towards our fellow-creatures: that we muſt carefully conſider and compare all theſe, and the fitneſſes and obligations ariſing from them; and thence collect our duty towards God, our neighbours, and ourſelves. There are many who repreſent this not only as the ſureſt way of coming to the right knowledge of the duty which God requireth of us, but as eaſy and obvious to all mankind. Lord Bolingbroke frequently talks, as if every man was able in this way to form a complete ſyſtem of Religion and Morals for himſelf, without the leaſt difficulty. He ſays, that "we more certainly know the will of God in this "way, than we can know it in any other:" and, "that it admits "of no doubt (*e*)." And that "by employing our reaſon to col- "lect the will of God from the fund of our nature phyſical and mo- "ral, and by contemplating frequently and ſeriouſly the laws that "are plainly and neceſſarily deducible from them, we may acquire

(*e*) Bolingbroke's Works, vol. IV. p. 287. and vol. V. p. 196. edit. 4to.

" not only a particular knowledge of thoſe laws, but a general, " and in ſome ſort an habitual, knowledge of the manner in " which God is pleaſed to exerciſe his ſupreme power in this " ſyſtem, beyond which we have no concern (*f*)." I readily own, that this ſearching into the relations and conſtitution of things, when carried on in a proper manner, may be of great uſe for coming at the knowledge of the law of nature, and for ſhewing, that the main principles of moral duty are founded in the nature of things, and are what right reaſon, duly exerciſed, will approve, when fairly explained and ſet in a proper light. But certainly this is not the ordinary way for the bulk of mankind to come to the knowledge of their duty. There are few who have leiſure or capacity, or inclination for profound enquiries into the natures and reaſons of things, and for drawing proper concluſions from them concerning the will of God. That which the ingenious and noble author now mentioned ſeems to lay the principal ſtreſs upon, viz. the employing our reaſon to collect the will of God from the fund of our nature phyſical and moral, is far from being ſo eaſy a taſk as he repreſents it. The knowledge of the human conſtitution, taken in a phyſical and moral view, includes a knowledge of body and ſoul in man, of the diſtinction between them, and the union of both, from whence duties reſult relating to the welfare of the whole compound: it takes in the knowledge of our appetites and paſſions, our affections and inſtincts, and of our rational and moral powers, that by comparing all theſe, we may know wherein conſiſteth the proper order and harmony of

(*f*) Bolingbroke's Works, vol. V. p. 100. See alſo p. 154. 178. 196. 271.

our

our natures, what are the juſt limits of our appetites and paſſions, how far they are to be gratified, and how far to be reſtrained. And can it be pretended, that every particular perſon, if left merely to himſelf, is able, without aſſiſtance or inſtruction, to conſider and compare all theſe, and to deduce from them a complete ſyſtem of laws for his own conduct? The rule which a noted author has laid down as ſufficient for the direction of mankind is this, that " they are ſo to regulate their appetites, as will " conduce to the exerciſe of their reaſon, the health of their " bodies, and the pleaſure of their ſenſes, taken and conſidered " together, ſince therein their happineſs conſiſts (*g*)." But if this be all the law that any man has to govern him in this matter, it is to be feared, that the biaſs of his appetites and paſſions, and the pleaſures of his ſenſes, would generally bring over his reaſon to judge in their own favour. Lord Bolingbroke, who, in the paſſage cited above, ſuppoſes that all men may eaſily collect the will of God from the fund of their own nature phyſical and moral, gives this account of the human ſyſtem: that " man has two " principles of determination, affections and paſſions excited by " apparent good, and reaſon, which is a ſluggard, and cannot " be ſo excited. Reaſon muſt be willed into action: and as this " can rarely happen, when the will is already determined by af- " fections and paſſions; ſo when it does happen, a ſort of com- " poſition generally happens between the two principles: and if " the affections and paſſions cannot govern abſolutely, they obtain " more indulgence from reaſon than they deſerve, or than ſhe

(*g*) Chriſtianity as old as the Creation, p. 14.

" would

" would ſhew if ſhe were entirely free from their force (*h*)." And he expreſly affirms, that " the appetites, paſſions, and im- " mediate objects of pleaſure, will always be of greater force to " determine us than reaſon (*i*)." This, indeed, is too univerſally expreſſed. It is not true, that the appetites and paſſions, and immediate objects of pleaſure, will always be of greater force to determine us than reaſon. Many inſtances there have been of excellent perſons, in whom reaſon has been of greater prevalence to determine them, than the paſſions or preſent ſenſual pleaſure. But it cannot be denied, that, in the preſent ſtate of mankind, the caſe is generally as his Lordſhip repreſents it: and that, as he elſewhere ſpeaks, " amidſt the contingencies that muſt ariſe from " the conſtitution of every individual, the odds will be on the ſide " of appetite (*k*)." To ſet up every man therefore for his own legiſlator, as if he were fit to be left to form a ſyſtem of law and duty for himſelf, without any farther inſtructions, is a romantic ſcheme, and would tend to introduce a general confuſion and licentiouſneſs, to the ſubverſion of all good order and morality. As to the duties we owe to God, it ſufficiently appears, from what was obſerved in the former part of this Work, how little mankind are qualified, if left to themſelves without inſtruction, to form a right judgment concerning them. And with reſpect to that part of our duty which relates to the government of our own

(*h*) Bolingbroke's Works, vol. V. p. 150. See alſo ibid. p. 116. 137. 227.

(*i*) Ibid. p. 267, 268.

(*k*) Ibid. p. 479.

appetites

appetites and paſſions, it will be eaſily acknowledged, that the bulk of mankind are not fit to be left to indulge them, as far as they themſelves think reaſonable. If every man was to judge of his duty by what, in his opinion, tends moſt to his own happineſs in the circumſtances he is in (which is the rule laid down by thoſe who make the higheſt pretences to the Law and Religion of Nature (*l*) in oppoſition to Revelation) it would ſoon bring in a very looſe morality: ſince there is nothing in which men are more apt to deceive themſelves, and to form falſe judgments, than in what relates to their proper happineſs. And even as to that part of morals which relates to our duty towards mankind, and which includes the exerciſe of juſtice, fidelity, benevolence, charity, and the various offices of the ſocial life, though there ſeem to be ſtrong traces of it in the human mind, and it is what right reaſon muſt approve as agreeable to the relations we bear to one another, yet I believe it will be granted, that it would not be very proper to leave every man merely to himſelf, to fix the meaſures of juſt and unjuſt, of right and wrong, in his dealings and tranſactions with other men. He would be often apt to judge by falſe weights and meaſures, and would be in great danger of being led aſide by his paſſions and ſelfiſh affections and intereſts, which, it is to be feared, would frequently bribe his reaſon to form wrong and partial judgments of things. No human government could be ſafe upon this plan, if every man were to be left abſolutely to his own direction, without any other guide. All the laws enacted by ſtates and commonwealths, and all books of

(*l*) Dr. Tindal, Morgan, and others.

morality,

morality, written by the wiſeſt men in all ages, proceed upon this ſuppoſition, that men ſtand in need of inſtruction and aſſiſtance, in order to the right forming and regulating their moral conduct.

Accordingly, I would obſerve,

3dly, That another way by which men come to the knowledge of moral duty, is by the inſtructions of others. This ſeems to be manifeſtly intended by the Author of our beings. We come into the world in an infant ſtate: we receive our firſt ideas of things, the firſt rudiments of knowledge, from our parents, and thoſe about us: and the notions which are inſtilled into our minds in our early years, often make a deep and laſting impreſſion, and have no ſmall influence upon our after-conduct. It is therefore one of the principal duties of parents to endeavour to train up their children betimes to worthy ſentiments. Thus we find that, in the Jewiſh law, it is the expreſs command of God, frequently urged by the higheſt authority, that parents ſhould take great and aſſiduous care to inſtruct their children in the ſtatutes and precepts which God had given them, and in the duties there required. It is mentioned to the praiſe of that excellent perſon Abraham, that "he commanded his children and houſhold after him to keep "the way of the Lord, to do juſtice and judgment (*m*)." The wiſeſt men in all ages have been ſenſible of the great advantage of a

(*m*) Gen. xviii. 19.

good

good education (*n*), and that men are not to be left merely to follow the dictates of rude, undiſciplined, and uninſtructed nature. As to matter of fact, it can ſcarce be denied, that no ſmall part of the notions men have of right and wrong, and of what is blameable and praiſe-worthy, comes by education and cuſtom, by tradition and inſtruction. And the vulgar almoſt every where adopt that ſcheme of religion and morals, which prevails in their reſpective countries. That great ſtateſman and moraliſt Puffendorf, who was remarkable for his knowledge of the law of nature and of mankind, aſcribes " the facility which " children and ignorant people have in determining between juſt " and unjuſt, right and wrong, to the habitude which they have " inſenſibly contracted from their cradles, or from the time they " firſt began to make uſe of their reaſon; by obſerving the good " approved, and the evil diſapproved, the one commended, and " the other puniſhed: and that it is owing to the ordinary practice " of the principal maxims of natural law in the events of com- " mon life, that there are few people who have any doubt whe- " ther theſe things might not be otherwiſe (*o*)." And Mr. Barbeyrac, in his notes upon it, after having obſerved that " there is " a manifeſt proportion between the maxims of natural law, and " the dictates of right reaſon; ſo that it is perceived by the moſt " ſimple people from the moment they are propoſed to them, and " that they attend and examine them;" adds, that " perhaps they

(*n*) See the Preliminary Diſcourſe, in the firſt volume of this Work, p. 8.

(*o*) De Jur. Nat. et Gent. lib. ii. cap. 3. ſect. 13.

" could never have diſcovered them of themſelves, and cannot al-
" ways comprehend the reaſons of them, or diſtinctly explain what
" they perceive concerning them; and that though no man who is
" arrived at the age of diſcretion can reaſonably pretend to excuſe
" himſelf as to this matter by invincible ignorance, yet it is never-
" theleſs true, that education, inſtruction, and example, are the
" ordinary canals by which theſe ideas enter into the minds of
" men: without this, the greater part of mankind would either
" almoſt entirely extinguiſh their natural light, or would never
" give the leaſt attention to them. Experience ſhews this but
" too plainly. Many things there are among ſavage people, and
" even among the moſt civilized nations, ſufficient to juſtify this
" melancholy and mortifying truth. From whence (ſaith he) it
" ought to be concluded, that every man ſhould uſe his beſt en-
" deavours to contribute, as far as is in his power, to inſtruct
" others in their duty, to eſtabliſh, ſtrengthen, and propagate ſo
" uſeful a knowledge (*p*)." This is certainly one conſiderable inſtance in which the Author of our beings intended that men ſhould be helpful to one another, in proportion to their abilities and opportunities. But it is, in a particular manner, incumbent upon parents, maſters of families, legiſlators and magiſtrates, the miniſters of religion, and thoſe who profeſs to inſtruct men in the ſcience of morals. And ſuch inſtructions properly given are, no doubt, of great advantage, and what we ought to be very thankful for. But it is manifeſt from experience, that merely human inſtruction cannot be abſolutely depended upon: and that men

(*p*) See Barbeyrac's Puffendorf, tom. I. p. 217. not. 7. edit. Amſt.

have

have been often led into wrong notions of morality, in very important inſtances, by thoſe who ought to have inſtructed them better.

I would therefore obſerve farther, that beſides the ſeveral ways which have been mentioned, whereby men come to the knowledge of moral duty, there is great need of a Divine Revelation, in order to the ſetting their duty before them in its juſt extent, and enforcing it upon them by the higheſt authority. It cannot reaſonably be denied, that God can, if he thinks fit, make diſcoveries of his will to mankind, in a way of extraordinary Revelation (*q*); and it is manifeſt, that if he ſhould pleaſe to do ſo, ſuch a Divine Revelation, confirmed by ſufficient evidence, and preſcribing in his name the particulars of our duty in plain and expreſs precepts, would be of great uſe, and would come with much greater weight and force, than merely human laws, or the reaſonings of philoſophers and moraliſts: and this method alſo hath God taken in his dealings with mankind; which is a convincing proof of his goodneſs, and the care he hath exerciſed towards them, in order to the leading men to the right knowledge and practice of their duty.

(*q*) See concerning this in the Preliminary Diſcourſe prefixed to the former volume, p. 17. et ſeq.

CHAP. II.

The principal heads of moral duty were made known to mankind from the beginning, and continued to be known and acknowledged in the patriarchal ages. When men fell from the right knowledge of God, they fell alſo in important inſtances from the right knowledge of moral duty. The law given to the people of Iſrael was deſigned to inſtruct and direct them in morals, as well as in the knowledge and worſhip of the one true God. A great deal was done in the methods of Divine Providence, to preſerve the ſenſe and knowledge of morals among the heathen nations; but they did not make a right uſe of the helps afforded them.

IT has been ſhewn, in the former part of this work, that as the firſt man was formed in an adult ſtate, and placed in a world ready prepared, and amply provided for his reception and entertainment, ſo there is great reaſon to think, that God communicated to him the knowledge of religion, in its main fundamental articles, eſpecially relating to the exiſtence and perfections of the Deity, and the creation of the world, that he might be in an immediate capacity of ſerving his maker, and anſwering the great end of his being. And one of the firſt and moſt natural enquiries, when he was made acquainted with the exiſtence of a God of infinite perfections, his Creator and Sovereign Lord, muſt have been what God would have him to do, and what was the duty required of him, in order to ſecure the Divine Favour and Approbation. For it cannot reaſonably be ſuppoſed, that he was left

left abſolutely to himſelf, and to his own will, to act as he thought fit, without any higher direction or law to govern him. He could have no human inſtructor to teach, or to adviſe him: he had no parents or progenitors, whoſe knowledge and experience might have been of uſe to him: and as he had no experience of his own, it is not probable that, in his circumſtances, he was left to frame a rule of duty for himſelf, and to find out the will of God by profound diſquiſitions into the nature and relations of things. We may therefore juſtly ſuppoſe, that a wiſe and good God, who deſigned him to be governed by a law, gave him a law by which he ſhould be governed, and communicated his will to him in relation to the duty required of him. And that this was actually the caſe in fact, may be concluded from the ſhort account given us by Moſes of the primæval ſtate of man. From that account it appears, that man was not left at his firſt formation to acquire ideas in the ordinary way, which would have been too tedious and ſlow as he was circumſtanced, but was at once furniſhed with the knowledge that was then neceſſary for him. He was immediately endued with the gift of language, which neceſſarily ſuppoſes that he was furniſhed with a ſtock of ideas; a ſpecimen of which he gave in giving names to the inferior animals, which were brought before him for that purpoſe. The ſame gift of language was imparted to the conſort provided for him; and they both were admitted in ſeveral inſtances to a near intercourſe with their Maker, and were immediately favoured with notions of ſeveral things which it concerned them to know. It pleaſed God to acquaint them with the dominion he had inveſted them with over the ſeveral creatures in this lower world: they had a divine

allowance

allowance and directions as to the food it was proper for them to eat: they were inſtructed that they were to be the parents of a numerous offſpring, and that they were to repleniſh the earth. The inſtitution and law of marriage, which was given them, ſhews that they were made acquainted with the duties of the conjugal relation; with which are nearly connected the duties required of them as parents towards the children which ſhould proceed from them, and the duties which their children ſhould render to them, and to one another. As God gave them the law of the Sabbath, we may well conclude that he directed them as to the proper way of ſanctifying it by worſhipping him the great Creator and Lord of the univerſe, and celebrating his glory as ſhining forth in the creation of the world, of which the Sabbath was deſigned to keep up a religious remembrance. The precept and injunction which was laid upon them not to eat the forbidden fruit, comprehended a conſiderable part of the moral law under it. It was deſigned to inſtruct them that they were not the abſolute lords of this lower world, but were under the dominion of an higher Lord, to whom they owed the moſt entire ſubjection, and unreſerved obedience, in an implicit reſignation to his ſupreme wiſdom and goodneſs: that they were bound to exerciſe a government over their appetites and inclinations, and not to place their higheſt happineſs in the gratification of them; and that they were not only to govern their bodily appetites, but to guard againſt an inordinate ambition, and to reſtrain their deſires of knowledge within juſt bounds, without prying with an unwarrantable curioſity into things which God thought fit to conceal from them. Upon the whole, we may juſtly conclude, that the firſt parents

of

of the human race had the knowledge of God, and of the main articles of their duty divinely communicated to them, as far as was proper, and ſuited to the ſtate and circumſtances they were in (*r*).

After the fall and diſobedience of our firſt parents, new duties aroſe ſuited to the alteration of their circumſtances. They were now to regard God as their offended Sovereign and Lord: diſcoveries were made to them both of his juſtice and righteous diſpleaſure againſt ſin, and of his placableneſs towards penitent ſinners, and his pardoning mercy; without an aſſurance of which they might have ſunk under thoſe deſponding fears which a conſciouſneſs of their guilt was apt to inſpire. Repentance towards God, a ſubmiſſion to his juſtice in the puniſhment inflicted upon them for their diſobedience, hope in his mercy, and a reliance on the promiſe he was graciouſly pleaſed to make to them, a fear of offending him for the future, and a deſire of approving themſelves to him by a new and dutiful obedience; theſe were diſpoſitions which it was the will of God they ſhould exerciſe. And as they ſtood in great need of a divine direction in thoſe circumſtances,

(*r*) Puffendorf, who muſt be acknowledged to be a very able judge in what relates to the law of nature, declares, in a paſſage I cited before, that "it is very "probable, that God taught the firſt men the chief heads of natural law, which "were afterwards preſerved and ſpread among their deſcendants by means of edu-"cation and cuſtom." He adds, that this does not hinder, but that the knowledge of them may be called natural, inaſmuch as the truth and certainty of them may be diſcovered in a way of reaſoning.

Grotius alſo gives it as his opinion, that the law was originally promulgated to Adam, the father of mankind, and through him to the human race; and again to Noah, the ſecond father of mankind, and by him tranſmitted to his deſcendants.

it

it is reaſonable to think that he ſignified his will to them in relation to their future conduct, and the religion required of fallen creatures. The hiſtory which Moſes has given of the antediluvian world is very ſhort: but in the account given of Cain and Abel it is plainly intimated, that there was in thoſe early ages an intercourſe between God and man, that he did not leave them without diſcoveries of his will, that a law had been given them with relation to the external worſhip of God, and particularly concerning the offering of ſacrifice. Accordingly they both obſerved it as an act of religion; but Abel, who was a better man, with a more pious diſpoſition than Cain. He is ſaid, by the ſacred writer to the Hebrews, to have offered ſacrifice by faith, which ſeems plainly to refer to a divine inſtitution and appointment; and that he well knew it was a rite which God required, and would accept. And its having ſpread ſo univerſally, among all nations from the moſt antient times, can ſcarce be accounted for but by ſuppoſing it to have been a part of Religion tranſmitted from the firſt ages to the whole race of mankind (*s*). What was ſaid to Cain, and the curſe inflicted upon him, ſuppoſed a divine law obliging to mutual love and benevolence, and of which the violence committed on his brother was a manifeſt breach. There were in the old world preachers of Righteouſneſs, who, we have reaſon to think, declared the will and law of God to men, and urged it upon them in his name, and by his authority, So Noah is called, 2 Pet.

(*s*) The reader may compare what is here ſaid with the firſt chapter of the former volume, in which ſeveral of the things here mentioned are more fully inſiſted upon; but it was neceſſary to take ſome notice of them in this place, to ſhew that God from the beginning made diſcoveries of his will to men concerning their duty.

ii. 5. and ſuch was that excellent perſon Enoch, and probably ſeveral others. To which it may be added, that if God had not made expreſs diſcoveries of his will to men, and given them laws bound upon them by his own Divine Authority, their guilt would not have been ſo highly aggravated as to draw down upon them ſo dreadful a ruin and condemnation. But they ſinned preſumptuouſly, and with a high hand: they allowed themſelves in an unreſtrained indulgence of their luſts and appetites, and committed all ſorts of violence, rapine, and wickedneſs, in the moſt manifeſt oppoſition to the divine law. They ſeem to have fallen into an atheiſtical neglect and contempt of all religion; and therefore are juſtly called "the world of the ungodly," 2 Pet. ii. 5. And the prophecy of Enoch, mentioned by St. Jude, ſeems particularly to charge them with the moſt audacious profaneneſs, and open contempt of Religion, both in their words and actions, for which the divine judgments were denounced againſt them.

Noah, with his family, who ſurvived that deſtruction, was no doubt well acquainted with thoſe divine laws, for the tranſgreſſion of which the ſinners of the old world were ſo ſeverely puniſhed; and a man of his excellent character, we may be ſure, took care to tranſmit them to his children and deſcendants: and the awful proofs of the divine juſtice and diſpleaſure againſt the wicked and diſobedient, tended to give the inſtructions and admonitions delivered to them by this preacher of Righteouſneſs a peculiar force. It appears from the brief hints given by Moſes, that God made renewed diſcoveries of his will after the flood to this ſecond father of mankind, and gave laws and injunctions which were deſigned

to be obligatory on the whole human race. The tradition of the Jews relating to the precepts delivered to the ſons of Noah is well known. And though we have not ſufficient proof, that they were preciſely in number or order what they pretend, yet that the ſubſtance of thoſe precepts was then given and promulgated to mankind by Divine Authority, there is good reaſon to believe. And conſidering the narrowneſs of the Jewiſh notions, their ſtrong prejudices againſt the Gentiles, and the contempt they had for them, this tradition of theirs deſerves a particular regard. For it ſhews, that it was an antient tradition among them, derived from their anceſtors, that God was the God not of the Jews only but alſo of the Gentiles; that he had not entirely caſt the Gentiles off from the beginning, without making diſcoveries of his will to them concerning religion, and their moral duty; but had given them laws, upon the obſervance of which they were in a ſtate of favour and acceptance with God (*t*). The moral laws which were afterwards publiſhed to the people of Iſrael, a ſummary of which is contained in the ten commandments, were in ſubſtance

(*t*) In the Talmudical books mention is made of "the pious among the nations "of the world," and a portion is aſſigned to them, as well as to the Iſraelites, in the world to come. Agreeably to this determination, Maimonides poſitively aſſerts, that the pious among the Gentiles have a portion in the world to come, De Pœnit. cap. 3. i. e. as it is there explained, thoſe that obſerved the precepts given to the ſons of Noah; by whom they underſtood all mankind. See alſo Gemar. Babylon. ad titul. Aboda Zara. cap. 1. Menaſſeh Ben Iſrael de Reſur. Mort. lib. ii. cap. 8 et 9. Theſe, with other teſtimonies, are cited by Selden de Jure Nat. et Gent. lib. vii. cap. 10. p. 877. edit. Lipſ. The paſſage there quoted by him from the Gemara Babylonica ad titul. Aboda Zara, is remarkable; which he tranſlates thus, "etiam Paganum, qui diligenter legem obſervaverit, veluti Pontificem Maximum "habendum:" i. e. as Mr. Selden explains it, "inter primarios Ebræorum, "quantum ad præmium attinet, cenſendum."

7 known

known before in the patriarchal times. And theſe divine injunctions, which were regarded as having been given by God to men, and enforced by a Divine Authority, may juſtly be ſuppoſed to be referred to in that remarkable paſſage, Gen. xviii. 19. where God ſaith concerning Abraham, " I know him, that he " will command his children and his houſhold after him, and " they ſhall keep the way of the Lord to do juſtice and judg- " ment." And no doubt that great patriarch did what God knew and declared he would do: and from him proceeded many and great nations. If we examine the antient book of Job, who deſcended from Abraham, and lived before the promulgation of the Moſaic law, we ſhall find that there is ſcarce any one of the moral precepts, which were afterwards publiſhed to the people of Iſrael, but what may be traced in the diſcourſes of that excellent man and his friends, and which are there repreſented as having been derived by tradition from the moſt antient times (*u*).

(*u*) Grotius mentions ſome inſtitutions and cuſtoms common to all men, and which cannot be ſo properly aſcribed to an inſtinct of nature, or the evident concluſions of reaſon, as to a perpetual and almoſt uninterrupted tradition from the firſt ages, ſuch as the ſlaying and offering up of ſacrifices, the pudor circa res venereas, the ſolemnities of marriage, the abhorrence of inceſtuous copulations. De Verit. Relig. Chriſt. lib. i. ſect. 7. See alſo De Jur. Bel. et Pac. lib. ii. cap. 5. ſect. 13. And Mr. Le Clerc, though fond of the hypotheſis, that many of the Moſaic rites were inſtituted in imitation of thoſe of the Egyptians, yet, ſpeaking of the offering of the firſt-fruits to God, which was in uſe both among the Egyptians and the Hebrews, ſays, that it was not derived from the one of theſe nations to the other, but came to both from the earlieſt ages, and probably was originally of divine appointment. And he adds, that perhaps from the ſame ſource many other uſages among both thoſe people were derived. See Cleric. Commentar. in Pentat. in his notes on Levit. xxiii. 10.

After the deluge, it is probable that the heads and leaders of the diſperſion, carried with them ſome of the main principles, both of religion and law, into the ſeveral places where they reſpectively ſettled: from whom they were tranſmitted to their deſcendants. For in thoſe early ages, as Plato obſerves, in the beginning of his third book of Laws, the people were wont to follow the laws and cuſtoms of their parents and anceſtors, and of the moſt antient men among them. It ſtrengthens this, when it is conſidered, that the moſt important moral maxims were delivered in the earlieſt times, not in a way of reaſoning, as they were afterwards by the moraliſt in the ages of learning and philoſophy, but in a way of authority, as principles derived from the antients, and which were regarded as of a divine original. It was a notion which generally obtained among the Heathens, that the original of law was from God, and that it derived its obliging force from a Divine Authority. The learned Selden has collected many teſtimonies to this purpoſe from poets, philoſophers, and other celebrated Pagan writers (*x*). It is probable that this notion was owing not only to the belief which obtained among them of a divine ſuperintending providence, but to the traditionary accounts they had of God's having given laws to the firſt men in the moſt antient times. And ſo ſtrongly was a ſenſe of this impreſſed upon the minds of the people, that it belonged to the Divinity to give laws to mankind, that the moſt antient legiſlators, in order to give their laws a proper weight and authority, found it neceſſary to perſuade them that theſe laws were not merely of

(*x*) De Jure Nat. et Gent. lib. i. cap. 8. p. 94. et ſeq. edit. Lipſ.

their

their own contriving, but were what they had received from the gods. And it is probable, that they took ſome of the chief heads of moral law, which had been handed down by antient tradition, into the laws of their reſpective ſtates and civil communities, eſpecially as far as they tended to the preſervation of the public order and good of the ſociety. It was in the eaſtern countries, where men firſt ſettled after the flood, that civil politics were firſt formed: there they were near the fountain-head of antient tradition, and there the greateſt remains of it were preſerved (*y*). And from thence the legiſlators in Greece and Italy, and the weſtern parts, principally derived their laws.

It appears from the account which hath been given, that a great deal had been done, in the courſe of the Divine Providence, for leading men into the knowledge of their duty. God had given laws to mankind from the beginning, and made expreſs diſcoveries of his Will to the firſt parents and anceſtors of the human race, concerning the principal points of duty required of

(*y*) "The eaſtern ſages were famous for their excellent moral maxims, derived "by tradition from the moſt antient times. This is obſervable concerning the "antient wiſe men among the Perſians, Babylonians, Bactrians, Indians, Egyptians. "That celebrated Chineſe philoſopher and moraliſt Confucius, did not pretend "himſelf to be the author of the moral precepts he delivered, but to have derived "them from wiſe men of much greater antiquity: particularly from Pung, who "lived near a thouſand years before him, and who alſo profeſſed to follow the doc-"trine of the antients; and eſpecially from Tao and Xun, two eminent Chineſe le-"giſlators, who, according to the Chineſe chronology, lived above 1500 years be-"fore Confucius. Or, if we ſhould ſuppoſe their chronology not to be exact, yet ſtill "it would follow, that the knowledge of morals was derived to them from the ear-"lieſt ages, when philoſophy and the ſciences had made but ſmall progreſs." See Navarrete's Hiſt. of China, p. 123. and Scientia Sinenſis Latinè expoſita, p. 120.

them.

them. They were bound by his authority, and by all manner of obligations, to tranſmit the knowledge of them to their deſcendants. And this was the more eaſily done, as they were agreeable to the beſt moral ſentiments of the human heart, and to the dictates of reaſon, which, if duly exerciſed, might ſee them to be conformable to the nature and relations of things. To which it may be added, that the good tendency of them was confirmed by obſervation and experience. And accordingly, the bulk of mankind, in all ages and nations, have ſtill retained ſuch notions of good and evil, as have laid a foundation for the approbation and diſapprobation of their own minds and conſciences. Taking all theſe things together, the laws and precepts originally given by Divine Revelation, the remains of which continued long among the Gentiles, the moral ſenſe of things implanted in the human heart, and the dictates of natural reaſon and conſcience, which were never utterly extinguiſhed in the Pagan world, together with the preſcriptions of the civil laws, which in many inſtances exhibited good directions for regulating the conduct; I ſay, taking all theſe things together, it muſt be acknowledged, that the Pagans were not left deſtitute of ſuitable helps, which, if duly improved, might have been of great uſe for leading them to the right knowledge and practice of moral duty (z). And undoubtedly there were eminent examples

(z) St. Paul repreſents the Gentiles as having the "work of the law written in "their hearts." The expreſſion is evidently metaphorical, and not to be puſhed too far. It is not deſigned to ſignify, as ſome have underſtood it, that all mankind have the whole law of God, comprehending every part of moral duty, written in plain characters upon their hearts: for this would prove that all men have naturally a clear knowledge of the whole of their duty without inſtruction: which is contrary to

examples among them of generoſity, patience, fortitude, equanimity, a love of juſtice, benevolence, gratitude, and other virtues. In Greece and Rome, in their beſt times, there ſeem to have been ſome hereditary notions, derived from their anceſtors, and cheriſhed and confirmed by education and cuſtom, of what is virtuous, honourable, and praiſe-worthy, and the contrary; which had a great effect upon their conduct. But, after all, it cannot be denied, that the notions of morality among them and the other Pagans, were in many reſpects greatly defective, and depraved with corrupt mixtures.

to the moſt evident fact and experience, and to what the apoſtle elſewhere obſerves concerning the Gentiles. But though this could not be his meaning in this manner of expreſſion, yet it certainly ſignifies, that the Gentiles, who had not the written law in their hands, were not left entirely deſtitute of a law. And when in any inſtances, they did ſome of the things contained in the law (for they were far from doing all things therein contained, as the apoſtle proves) they ſhewed that in thoſe inſtances they had the work of the law written in their hearts; i. e. that they had an inward ſenſe of the Divine Law in ſome of its important branches, ſo as to lay a foundation for the ſelf-approving or ſelf-condemning reflections of their own minds, and for their being judged by God on the account of them. This is evidently the apoſtle's intention in this paſſage. And it muſt be acknowledged, that there were ſcarce any of the Heathens, even in times of their greateſt degeneracy, but had in ſome reſpects the work of the law written in their hearts, i. e. ſome inward ſenſe of right and wrong, of good and evil; to which their conſciences bore witneſs: though undoubtedly this ſenſe of moral duty was in ſome of them far clearer and of greater extent than in others, and in all of them vaſtly ſhort of what we enjoy, who have the benefit of the Chriſtian Revelation. The apoſtle, ſpeaking of the Gentiles at the time of the publication of the Goſpel, repreſents them as amazingly corrupted, even in their moral notions of things. He gives it as their general character, that they "had their underſtandings darkened, being alienated from the "life of God through the ignorance that was in them, becauſe of the blindneſs of "their hearts." And then he goes on to ſhew the happy change that was wrought in thoſe of them who were "taught the truth as it is in Jeſus." Eph. iv. 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, &c.

As they fell from the right knowledge of the one true God, which, as a learned author (*a*), who is a warm advocate for the Morality of the Pagans, obſerves, is " the great foundation of " morality," they fell alſo from a juſt knowledge of moral duty in very important inſtances. Idolatry not only introduced a great corruption into the worſhip of God, and all that part of duty which immediately relateth to the Supreme Being, but alſo into their moral conduct in other reſpects. Eſpecially, when the worſhip of hero deities became general, many of whom gave examples of vicious conduct, the worſhip of ſuch gods naturally tended to corrupt their moral notions and ſentiments, and to make them very looſe and diſſolute in their practice: to which may be added bad and immoral cuſtoms, owing to various cauſes. And in many places their civil laws, though they were of uſe to their morals in ſeveral inſtances, yet led them aſtray in others. And even their wiſe men and philoſophers frequently advanced notions inconſiſtent with the truth and purity of morals: of which full proof will be given in the enſuing part of this treatiſe.

When idolatry and polytheiſm began to ſpread generally among the nations, it pleaſed God to ſelect a peculiar people, among whom a polity was erected of an extraordinary kind; the fundamental principle of which was the knowledge and worſhip of the one true God, and him only, in oppoſition to all idolatry. He alſo gave them a code of holy and excellent laws, containing the main articles of the duty which God requires of men, in plain

(*a*) Sykes's Connect. and Principles of Natural and Revealed Religion, p. 364.

and

and expreſs precepts. The moral laws obligatory on all mankind were ſummarily comprehended in the Ten Commandments, which were promulgated by God himſelf with a moſt amazing ſolemnity at mount Sinai, and written in the two tables of ſtone, to be a ſtanding law to that people. They were not left to themſelves, to work out a ſyſtem of moral duty merely by their own reaſon. Even ſuch things as ſeemed moſt plain to the common ſenſe of mankind, as the precepts preſcribing the honouring our parents, and forbidding to kill, ſteal, and commit adultery, were bound upon them by expreſs laws from God himſelf, and enforced by his own Divine Authority. And he commanded them to be very aſſiduous and diligent in teaching thoſe laws to their children, and inſtructing them in the particulars of the duty which God required of them (*b*). And it is very probable, that the fame of their laws, and the glorious proofs of a Divine Authority by which they were enforced, was ſpread abroad among the nations. This ſeems to be plainly ſignified in what Moſes declares to the people of Iſrael, when ſpeaking of the ſtatutes and judgments which the Lord commanded them, he ſaith, " Know therefore, and do " them; for this is your wiſdom and your underſtanding, in the " ſight of the nations, which ſhall hear all theſe ſtatutes, and " ſay, Surely this great nation is a wiſe and underſtanding people." He adds, " And what nation is there ſo great that hath ſtatutes " and judgments ſo righteous as all this law which I ſet before " you this day (*c*)?" It may reaſonably be ſuppoſed, that as the

(*b*) Deut. vi. 6, 7.

(*c*) Ibid. iv. 6, 7, 8.

reputation of Moſes as a lawgiver was very high among the nations, his laws might, in ſeveral inſtances, ſerve as a pattern to other lawgivers, who might borrow ſome of the Moſaic precepts and inſtitutions. Artapanus, as cited by Euſebius, probably ſpeaks the ſentiments of many other Heathens, when he ſo highly extols the wiſdom of Moſes and his laws, and ſaith, that he delivered many things very uſeful to mankind, and that from him the Egyptians themſelves borrowed many inſtitutions (*d*). This might be true in ſeveral inſtances, though he is miſtaken in thoſe he particularly mentions. Many learned men have obſerved a great affinity between ſome of the laws enacted in Athens and other ſtates, and thoſe of Moſes, who publiſhed his laws before the moſt antient legiſlators that we know of publiſhed theirs. And there is good reaſon to believe, that the Moſaic laws were the firſt laws that were ever committed to writing.

But though it is probable the laws given by Moſes, in the name of God himſelf, were of advantage, in many inſtances, to preſerve the ſenſe and knowledge of moral duty among the nations, yet as thoſe laws were in a ſpecial manner delivered to one particular nation, who were for wiſe ends kept ſeparate by ſome peculiar uſages from other people, they were not ſo well fitted for univerſal uſe. It pleaſed God, therefore, at the time which ſeemed moſt fit to his infinite wiſdom, in compaſſion to the wretched ſtate of mankind, after having exerciſed long patience and forbearance towards them, to make a new Revelation of his Will, which

(*d*) Euſeb. Præp. Evangel. lib. ix. cap. 27. p. 432.

was

was commanded to be publiſhed to all nations, in which their duty is ſet before them in its juſt extent, enforced by God's own expreſs authority, and by ſuch arguments and motives, as are moſt proper to work upon the mind. This Revelation and ſyſtem of Divine Laws is brought us by the moſt illuſtrious meſſenger that could be ſent for that purpoſe, the Son of God in human fleſh. His Divine Miſſion was confirmed by the moſt convincing atteſtations; and he hath alſo exemplified to us the Divine Law in all its purity and excellency, in his own Sacred Life and Practice, and hath provided the moſt gracious aſſiſtances to help our infirmities, that we may be the better enabled to perform the duties required of us. And what great need the world ſtood in of ſuch a Revelation, and conſequently how thankful we ſhould be for ſo great a bleſſing, is what I now proceed diſtinctly to ſhew.

CHAP. III.

A particular enquiry into the ſtate of morality in the Heathen world. A complete rule of morals, taken in its juſt extent, comprehends the duties relating to God, our neighbours, and ourſelves. If the Heathens had ſuch a rule among them, it would appear either in the precepts of their religion, or in the preſcriptions of their civil laws, or cuſtoms which have the force of laws, or in the doctrines and inſtructions of their philoſophers and moraliſts. It is propoſed diſtinctly to conſider each of theſe. As to what paſſed among them for religion, morality did not properly make any part of it, nor was it the office of their prieſts to teach men virtue. As to the civil laws and conſtitutions, ſuppoſing them to have been never ſo proper for civil government, they were not fitted to be an adequate rule of morals. The beſt of them were, in ſeveral reſpects, greatly defective. Various inſtances produced of civil laws, and of cuſtoms which had the force of laws, among the moſt civilized nations, eſpecially among the antient Egyptians and Greeks, which were contrary to the rules of morality.

MORAL duty, taken in its juſt extent, is uſually and juſtly divided into three main branches. The firſt relates to the duties of piety we more immediately owe to God, which includes the rendering him that religious worſhip and adoration, that love and reverence, that truſt and affiance, that unreſerved ſubmiſſion, reſignation,

reſignation, and obedience, which is due to him from his reaſonable creatures. The ſecond relates to the duties we owe to our neighbours, or to mankind, which takes in all that is comprehended in the exerciſe of juſtice, charity, mercy, benevolence, fidelity towards our fellow-creatures, and all the various offices and virtues of the ſocial life. The third relates more immediately to ourſelves, and includes all the duties of ſelf-government, the keeping our appetites and paſſions under proper regulations, and maintaining a purity of body and ſoul, and whatſoever tends to the right ordering of our own temper, and to the attaining the true rectitude and perfection of our nature. That cannot be ſaid to be an adequate rule of moral duty, which does not extend to all theſe, with ſufficient authority, clearneſs, and certainty. By this let us examine the ſtate of morality in the Heathen world: and, upon an impartial enquiry, we ſhall find, that though that part of moral law, which relates to civil duty and ſocial virtue, was for the moſt part preſerved, as far as was neceſſary to the peace and order of ſociety; yet as to the other branches of duty, that which relates to the duties we more immediately owe to God, and that which relates to ſelf-government and purity, it was through the corruption of mankind greatly perverted and depraved. If the Heathens had among them a complete and ſettled rule of moral duty in its juſt extent, it muſt be found either in the precepts of their Religion, and inſtructions of its Miniſters, or in the preſcriptions of the civil laws and the inſtitutions of the magiſtrates, or in cuſtoms that had the force of laws, or laſtly, in the doctrines and maxims of their philoſophers and moraliſts.

There

There needs not much be ſaid as to the firſt of theſe. Religion, when it is of the right kind, and conſidered in its moſt comprehenſive notion, takes in the whole of moral duty, as neceſſarily belonging to it, and both preſcribes it in its juſt extent, and enforces it by the higheſt authority, that of God himſelf, and by the moſt important motives. But in this the Heathen Religion was very defective. There were indeed ſome general principles of Religion, which were in ſome meaſure preſerved among the Pagan nations, and never were entirely extinguiſhed, relating to the exiſtence and attributes of the Deity, and to a Providence exerciſing an inſpection over human actions and affairs, and rewarding the virtuous and puniſhing the wicked. The notions of theſe things, though attended with much obſcurity, and perverted and debaſed with many corrupt mixtures, yet had a good effect in laying reſtraints upon vice and wickedneſs, and encouraging virtue, and keeping up the face of order among the people; and were actually made uſe of by the wiſeſt and ableſt legiſlators for that purpoſe. But what paſſed for religion among the Pagans, and was eſtabliſhed by their laws, and adminiſtred by their prieſts, neither taught any ſcheme of doctrines neceſſary to be believed, nor held forth a code of laws or rule of moral duty for regulating and directing the practice. It conſiſted properly in the public rites and ceremonies to be obſerved in the worſhip of their deities. "The prieſts (as Mr. Locke obſerves) made it "not their buſineſs to teach men virtue (*e*)." Their office was, according

(*e*) To the ſame purpoſe Lactantius obſerves, that thoſe who taught the worſhip of the gods, gave no directions as to what related to the regulation of men's manners, and

according to the account Varro gives of it, to inſtruct men what gods they were to worſhip, what ſacrifices they were to offer to their ſeveral deities, and to direct them in what manner they were to obſerve the appointed rites. It is true, that Cicero, in his Oratio pro domo ſuâ ad Pontifices, repreſents them as having a general inſpection over the manners of the citizens: but this they did not properly as prieſts of religion, but as miniſters of the ſtate. For in the Roman government, the ſame perſons acted in both capacities, and the prieſthood was ſo modelled as to anſwer the civil and political views of the commonwealth. It is a juſt obſervation of the Baron Puffendorf, that "what the Romans called "Religion was chiefly inſtituted for the benefit of the ſtate, that "they might be the better able to rule the minds of the people, "according to the conveniences and exigences of the public." He adds, That "there were no certain heads or articles of religion "among the Romans, whence the people might be inſtructed "concerning the Being and Will of God, or how they ought to "regulate their practice and actions ſo as to pleaſe God (*f*)." Thoſe who were diligent in the obſervation of the ſacred cuſtomary rites, and worſhipped the gods according to the laws, were looked upon as having fulfilled the duties of religion. But no farther regard was had to their morals, than as the intereſt of the ſtate

and to the conduct of life. "Nihil ibi differitur, quod proficiat ad mores ex-"colendos, vitamque formandam." And that among the Pagans, philoſophy [or the doctrine of morals] and the religion of the gods, were entirely diſtinct, and ſeparated from one another. "Philoſophia et religio deorum diſjuncta ſunt, longè-"que diſcreta." Divin. Inſtit. lib. iv. cap. 3. See alſo Auguſtin. de Civit. Dei, lib. ii. cap. 4. 6 et 7.

(*f*) Puffendorf's Introduct. to the Hiſt. of Europe, chap. i. ſect. 10.

was

was concerned. If at any time the public was expoſed to great calamities, and it was thought neceſſary to appeaſe the gods, and avert their diſpleaſure, repentance and a reformation of manners was never preſcribed by the prieſts, as one of the means appointed by religion for that purpoſe: but they had recourſe on ſuch occaſions to ſome odd and trifling ceremony; ſuch as the dictator's ſtriking a nail into a door, or ſomething of the like nature (*g*). So far was the Heathen religion, and the worſhip of their deities, from giving men a right notion of morality, or engaging them to the practice of it, that in many inſtances the rites made uſe of in the worſhip of their gods were of an immoral nature, and inſtead of promoting the practice of virtue, had a tendency to encourage vice and licentiouſneſs. This ſufficiently appears from the inſtances produced in the former volume, chap. vii. To the inſtances there mentioned, I now add, what a very learned writer has obſerved, that Ariſtotle, in his Politics, "having blamed all lewd and obſcene images and pictures, excepts thoſe of the gods, which "religion has ſanctified (*h*)."

It appears then, that if a complete rule of morals was to be found among the the Pagans, we muſt not look for it in their religion, but either in the civil laws and conſtitutions, and cuſtoms which obtained the force of laws, or in the doctrines and precepts of the philoſophers and moraliſts.

(*g*) Hume's Nat. Hiſtory of Religion, p. 105. Div. Legation of Moſes, vol. I. p. 97. edit. 4th.

(*h*) Ibid. p. 154.

Many

Many have ſpoke with admiration of the civil laws and conſtitutions, which were in force among the Pagan nations, as if they were ſufficient to direct and regulate their moral conduct. Some of the moſt eminent of the antient philoſophers ſeem to reſolve the whole duty of a good man into obedience to the laws of his country. Socrates defines the juſt man to be one that obeys the laws of the republic, and that he becomes unjuſt by tranſgreſſing them (*i*). And Xenophon accordingly obſerves, that that philoſopher was in all things for adhering cloſely and inviolably to the laws, both publicly and privately, and exhorted all men to do ſo (*k*). And many paſſages might be produced to ſhew, that both he and Plato, and the philoſophers in general, urged it as the duty of the citizens to make the laws of their country the rule of their practice, both in religious and civil matters. Some modern authors have talked in the ſame ſtrain, and have laid the chief ſtreſs on human laws and government, as giving the beſt directions, and furniſhing the moſt effectual means, for the ſecuring and improving the moral ſtate (*l*). It cannot be denied, that there were many excellent laws and conſtitutions among the Heathen nations, and which were of great uſe in regulating the manners of men, and preſerving good order in ſociety: but it is no hard matter to prove, that the civil laws of any community are very imperfect meaſures

(*i*) Xenoph. Memor. Socr. lib. iv. cap. 4. ſect. 13.

(*k*) Ibid. lib. i. ſect. 1, 2, et ſeq.

(*l*) Lord Bolingbroke's Works, Vol. V. p. 480, 481. edit. 4to. This alſo is the ſcheme of the author of the book De l'Eſprit, who makes the law of the ſtate to be the only rule and meaſure of virtue and duty, and what he calls a good legiſlation to be the only means of promoting it.

of moral duty. A man may obey thoſe laws, and yet be far from being truly virtuous: he may not be obnoxious to the penalties of thoſe laws, and yet be a vicious and bad man. Nor indeed is it the proper deſign of thoſe laws to render men really and inwardly virtuous, but ſo to govern their outward behaviour, as to maintain public order. The higheſt end they propoſe is the temporal welfare and proſperity of the ſtate. The heart, the proper ſeat of virtue and vice, is not within the cognizance of civil laws and human governments. Nor can the ſanctions of thoſe laws, or any rewards and puniſhments which the ableſt human legiſlators can contrive, be ever applied to enforce the whole of moral duty. They cannot reach to the inward temper, or the ſecret affections and diſpoſitions of the ſoul, and intentions of the will, on which yet the morality of human actions, or their being good and evil in the ſight of God, does principally depend. Seneca ſays very well, that "it is a narrow notion of innocence to meaſure a man's "goodneſs only by the law. Of how much larger extent is the "rule of duty or of good offices, than that of legal right? How "many things are there which piety, humanity, liberality, ju-"ſtice, fidelity require, which yet are not within the compaſs of "the public ſtatutes?—Quàm anguſta innocentia eſt ad legem "bonum eſſe? Quantò latius officiorum patet quam juris regula? "Quàm multa pietas, humanitas, liberalitas, juſtitia, fides exi-"gunt, quæ omnia extra publicas tabulas ſunt (*m*)?"

But

(*m*) Sen. de Ira. lib. ii. cap. 27. The learned biſhop of Glouceſter has ſet this matter in a very clear light, in his Divine Legation of Moſes, vol. I. book i. ſect. 2. p. 13, et ſeq. where he ſhews, that the laws of civil ſociety, alone conſidered, are inſufficient

But let us more particularly enquire into the moſt celebrated civil laws and inſtitutions among thoſe that have been accounted the moſt civilized and beſt political nations.

The Egyptians were antiently much admired for the wiſdom of their laws, which were looked upon to be well fitted for the maintenance of public order: but they were far from furniſhing adequate rules of virtue, and were, in ſome reſpects, greatly deficient. There is a paſſage of Porphyry, which has been thought to give an advantageous idea of the Egyptian morality. He informs us, that when they embalmed the body of any of the nobles, they were wont to take out the belly, and put it into a cheſt; and then holding up the cheſt towards the ſun, one of the embalmers made an oration or ſpeech in the name of the defunct perſon; which contained the dead man's apology for himſelf, and the righteouſneſs on the account of which he prayed to be admitted to the fellowſhip of the eternal gods. " O Lord the Sun, " and all ye gods that give life to men, receive me, and admit me " to the fellowſhip of the eternal gods: for whilſt I lived in the " world, I religiouſly worſhipped the gods which my parents " ſhewed me: thoſe that generated my body I always honoured: " I neither killed any man, nor fraudulently took away any thing " that was committed to my truſt; nor have I been guilty of any

inſufficient to prevent or cure moral diſorders; that they can have no further efficacy than to reſtrain men from open tranſgreſſions; nor can their influence be extended thus far in all caſes; eſpecially where the irregularity is owing to the violence of the ſenſual paſſions: they alſo overlook what are called the duties of imperfect obligation, ſuch as gratitude, hoſpitality, charity, &c. though theſe duties are of conſiderable importance in the moral character.

" other very heinous or inexpiable wickedneſs: if in my life-time " I offended in eating or drinking any of the things which it was " not lawful for me to eat or drink; the offence was not com- " mitted by myſelf, but by theſe;" pointing to the cheſt, which contained his belly and entrails, and which was then thrown into the river: after which, the reſt of the body was embalmed as pure. Porphyry cites for this Euphantus, who tranſlated this prayer or oration out of the Egyptian tongue (*n*). This may ſeem to have been well contrived to point out the moſt eminent parts of a virtuous life and character, which tended to recommend a man to the divine favour. But it is to be obſerved, that the ſun is here addreſſed to as the Supreme Lord, together with other gods, who are repreſented as the authors and givers of life: and that the firſt and principal thing here mentioned as a proof of the perſon's piety is, his having worſhipped the gods which his parents had ſhewn him. And what kind of deities they were which the Egyptians worſhipped is generally known. So that they were wrong with reſpect to the fundamental principle of morality, the knowledge and worſhip of the one true God. A late learned and ingenious author has ſhewn, that though the Egyptians had ſome very good conſtitutions, there reigned in their government a multitude of abuſes and eſſential defects, authorized by their laws, and the fundamental principles of their ſtate. There were great indecencies and impurities in many of their public eſtabliſhed rites and ceremonies of religion. It was permitted among them for brothers and ſiſters to marry one another. There is a law of

(*n*) Porph. de Abſcon. lib. iv. ſect. 10.

theirs, mentioned by Diodorus Siculus, lib. i. cap. 9. p. 69. edit. Amſt. and by Aulus Gellius, lib. ii. cap. 20. which, under pretence of making it eaſy for the citizens to recover what was ſtolen from them, really encouraged and authorized theft: it not only aſſured the thieves of impunity, but of a reward, by giving them the fourth part of the prize, upon their reſtoring that which they had ſtolen (*o*). The ſame author obſerves, that the Egyptians were univerſally cried out againſt for their want of faith and honeſty, as he ſhews from many teſtimonies (*p*). And Sextus Empiricus informs us, that among many of the Egyptians, for women to proſtitute themſelves was accounted ευκλεες, a glorious or honourable thing (*q*).

It is univerſally acknowledged, that the Greeks were amongſt the moſt knowing and civilized nations of antiquity. There the moſt celebrated philoſophers and moraliſts opened their ſchools, and among them learning, and the arts, eminently flouriſhed. Accordingly, they had a very high opinion of their own wiſdom, and looked upon the reſt of the world as much inferior to them, and to whom they gave the common title of Barbarians. Let us ſee therefore whether their laws and conſtitutions bid fairer for improvement in morals, than thoſe of other nations. Some of their wiſeſt men and legiſlators travelled into Egypt, and other parts of

(*o*) De l'Origine des Loix, des Arts, &c. tom. I. liv. i. art. 4. p. 49. et tom. III. p. 28. et p. 352. a la Haye 1758.

(*p*) Ibid. p. 354.

(*q*) Pyrrh. Hypotyp. lib. iii. cap. 24.

the

the eaſt, to obſerve their laws, and tranſplant ſuch as they moſt approved into their own. It has been already hinted, that the learned have obſerved a near affinity in ſome remarkable inſtances between the antient Attic laws, as alſo thoſe of the twelve tables, and thoſe of Moſes (*r*); which makes it probable, that the laws delivered to the Iſraelites, which were of a divine original, and were of greater antiquity than any of the laws of the Græcian ſtates, were in ſeveral reſpects of great advantage to other nations. Excellent laws and conſtitutions there undoubtedly were in ſeveral of the Grecian republics: but if the beſt of them were ſelected, and formed into one code, they would be far from exhibiting a complete rule of morals. They were all, like the laws of other nations, fundamentally wrong in all that part of moral duty which relates to the ſervice and adoration we owe to the one true God; and in ſeveral reſpects alſo in granting too great an indulgence to the ſenſual paſſions, and in making ſome important points of morality give way to what they looked upon to be the intereſt of the ſtate.

The laws of Lycurgus have been highly celebrated both by antients and moderns. Plutarch obſerves, that this lawgiver was pronounced by the oracle the Beloved of God, and rather a God than a Man: that he ſtands an undeniable proof, that a perfect

(*r*) See Sam. Petit. Comment. in Leg. Attic. printed at Paris 1635. See alſo Grot. in Matt. v. 28. et de Verit. Rel. Chriſt. lib. i. ſect 15. p. 28. edit. Cleric. It is true, that Mr. Le Clerc, in a note which he has there added, ſuppoſes, after Dr. Spenſer, that both the Athenians and the Hebrews derived the laws Grotius refers to from the Egyptians. But no authorities can be produced to ſhew that the Egyptians had ſuch laws, but what are much poſterior to the times of Moſes.

wiſe

wiſe man is not a mere notion and chimera, as ſome have thought, and has obliged the world with a nation of philoſophers. He expreſſes a high admiration of the Lacedæmonian inſtitutions, as excellently fitted to form men to the excerciſe of virtue, and to maintain and promote mutual love among the citizens. He prefers them to the laws of all the other Græcian ſtates, and obſerves, that all thoſe who have written well of politics, as Plato, Diogenes, Zeno, and others, have taken Lycurgus for their model: and that Ariſtotle himſelf highly extols him, as having deſerved even greater honours than the Spartans paid him, though they offered ſacrifices to him as to a god (*s*). Many of the moderns, and among others the celebrated Monſ. de Monteſquieu profeſſeth himſelf a great admirer of the laws of Lycurgus. He obſerves, that he promoted virtue by means which ſeemed contrary to it (*t*). But I think there are ſeveral of his laws and inſtitutions to which this obſervation cannot juſtly be applied; and which, inſtead of promoting the practice of virtue, counteracted it in important inſtances. Some of his admirers have acknowledged, that his laws were all calculated to eſtabliſh a military commonwealth, and that every thing was looked upon as juſt, which was thought to contribute to that end. Plato obſerves, in his firſt book of laws, that they were fitted rather to render men valiant than juſt. Ariſtotle makes the ſame obſervation (*u*). And

(*s*) See Plutarch's Life of Lycurgus, eſpecially at the latter end.

(*t*) L'Eſprit des Loix, vol. I. livre iv. ch. 6. p. 49, 50. edit. Edinb.

(*u*) Ariſt. Politic. lib. ii. cap. 9. p. 331. et lib. vii. cap. 14. p. 443. Oper. tom. II. edit. Paris.

Plutarch

Plutarch owns, that ſome perſons blamed the laws of Lycurgus as well contrived to make men good ſoldiers, but very defective in civil juſtice and honeſty. It appears from the teſtimony of ſeveral authors, as well as from ſome remarkable facts, that they were for ſacrificing probity, and every other conſideration, to what they thought the good of the ſtate required; and judged every method lawful which might procure them ſucceſs. The breach of faith coſt them nothing. Herodotus ſays, that they who were acquainted with the genius of that people knew that their actions were generally contrary to their words, and that they could not depend upon them in any matter (*x*). And though they were undoubtedly very brave, yet they valued a victory more which was gained by deceit and guile, than one that was obtained by open valour. How haughtily and cruelly, as well as perfidiouſly, did they behave towards Athens and Thebes, and all thoſe whom they thought it their intereſt to oppreſs!

Many of their laws and cuſtoms were contrary to humanity. And the rigour of their diſcipline tended in ſeveral inſtances to ſtifle the ſentiments of tenderneſs and benevolence, of mercy and compaſſion, ſo natural to the human breaſt. I have in the former part of this Work, chap. vii. taken notice of their cuſtom of whipping boys, even to death, at the altar of Diana Orthia. To which it may be added, that their young men and boys were wont to meet and fight with the utmoſt rage and fierceneſs on certain days of the year; of which Cicero ſays he himſelf was witneſs (*y*).

(*x*) Herod. lib. ix. n. 51. Francof. 1605.

(*y*) Tuſcul. Diſput. lib. v. cap. 27. p. 401. edit. Paris.

But

But nothing could exceed their cruelty to their ſlaves, the helotes, as they called them, who laboured the ground for them, and performed all their works and manufactures. Theſe ſlaves could have no juſtice done them, whatever inſults or injuries they ſuffered. They were regarded as the ſlaves not merely of one particular maſter, but of the public, ſo that every one might injure them with impunity. Not only did they treat them in their general conduct with great harſhneſs and inſolence, but it was part of their policy to maſſacre them, on ſeveral occaſions, in cold blood, and without provocation. Several authors have mentioned their Κρυπτία, ſo called from their lying in ambuſcade, in thickets and clefts of the rocks, from which they iſſued out upon the helotes, and killed all they met; and ſometimes they ſet upon them in the open day, and murdered the ableſt and ſtouteſt of them, as they were at work in the fields. The deſign of this was to prevent their ſlaves from growing too numerous or powerful, which might endanger the ſtate. But, as M. de Monteſquieu very properly obſerves, the danger was only owing to their cruel and unjuſt treatment of them; whereas among the Athenians, who treated their ſlaves with great gentleneſs, there is no inſtance of their proving troubleſome or dangerous to the public (z). Plutarch is loth to believe that this inhuman cuſtom was inſtituted by Lycurgus, though he does not deny that it was in uſe among the Lacedæmonians. But Ariſtotle ſays, it was an inſtitution of Lycurgus. And whoever duly conſiders the ſpirit of ſeveral of his laws, will not think him incapable of it. And from the

(z) L'Eſprit des Loix, vol. I. liv. xv. chap 16, p. 356, 357.

ſame cruel policy it was, that, as Thucydides informs us, they deſtroyed two thouſand of the helotes, whom they had armed, when the exigences of the ſtate required it, and who had ſerved them bravely and faithfully in their wars.

Another inſtance of the inhumanity of the laws of Lycurgus was this. The father was obliged by the laws to bring his child to a certain place appointed for that purpoſe, to be examined by a committee of the men of that tribe to which he belonged. Their buſineſs was carefully to view the infant, and if they found it deformed, and of a bad conſtitution, they cauſed it to be caſt into a deep cavern near the mountain Taygetus, as thinking it neither good for the child itſelf, nor for the public, that it ſhould be brought up. Plutarch, who takes notice of this, paſſes no cenſure upon it. And he pronounces in general, at the concluſion of his life of Lycurgus, that he could ſee no injuſtice, or want of equity, in any of that lawgiver's inſtitutions.

Many have taken notice of that conſtitution of his, by which the Spartan boys were trained up to dextrous thieving. They were obliged to ſteal their victuals, or be without them; which put them upon watching opportunities, and ſeizing what they could lay their hands on. It behoved them to do this with dexterity and activity; for if they were taken in the fact, they were whipped moſt unmercifully; not for ſtealing, as Sextus Empiricus obſerves, but for being catched (*a*). This was deſigned to ſharpen

(*a*) Pyrrhon. Hypotyp. lib. iii. cap. 24.

their

their invention, and to exerciſe their agility and courage. Some authors, and among others, the celebrated Mr. Rollin, in his Antient Hiſtory, are of opinion, that this could not be called theft, becauſe it was allowed by the ſtate. But, I think, it cannot be denied, that in this method the youth were early enured to arts of rapine, and were taught to think there was no great hurt in invading another man's property, and to form contrivances for that purpoſe.

Notwithſtanding all the auſterity which appeared in the laws of Lycurgus, there were ſome of his conſtitutions, which ſeemed to be very little conſiſtent with modeſty and decency. There were common baths in which the men and women bathed together. And it was ordered, that the young maidens ſhould appear naked in the public exerciſes, as well as the young men, and that they ſhould dance naked with them at the ſolemn feſtivals and ſacrifices (*b*): and as to the married women, Lycurgus allowed

(*b*) That eminent philoſopher Plato, in forming the model of a perfect commonwealth, propoſed the laws of Lycurgus, in this and other inſtances, for his pattern, as I ſhall have occaſion to obſerve afterwards. Thus neither the philoſopher nor lawgiver ſhewed any great regard to the rules of modeſty and purity. A remarkable proof this, that the greateſt men among the Pagans, when left to their own judgments in matters of morality, were apt to form wrong notions concerning it, even in inſtances where one ſhould think the dictates of nature and reaſon might have given them better directions. It may not be improper, on this occaſion, to mention an obſervation of an eminent political writer Monſ. de Monteſquieu. He obſerves, that all nations are agreed in looking upon the incontinence of women as a thing that deſerves contempt: and he ſuppoſes that " a natural modeſty is implanted in " women, as a defence and preſervative againſt incontinence: that therefore it is " not true, that incontinence follows the laws of nature: it violates thoſe laws: " and on the contrary, it is modeſty and reſervedneſs that follows thoſe laws."

allowed huſbands to impart the uſe of their wives to handſome and deſerving men, in order to the begetting healthy and vigorous children for the commonwealth. It is a little odd to obſerve that learned and grave philoſopher Plutarch endeavouring to juſtify theſe conſtitutions, in his life of Lycurgus. That lawgiver was for ſacrificing modeſty, and the ſanctity of the marriage-bed, to what he thought was for the benefit of the ſtate. But theſe conſtitutions had, as might reaſonably have been expected, a very bad influence upon their morals. The Spartan women were accounted the moſt immodeſt and licentious of any in Greece, as Ariſtotle obſerves (*c*).

I ſhall conclude this account of the Lacedæmonians, and of their laws and cuſtoms, with the account given of them by a late ingenious author: that they were a people proud, imperious, deceitful, perfidious, capable of ſacrificing every thing to their ambition and their intereſt, and who had no eſteem of the liberal

He adds, that " where the phyſical force of certain climates carries perſons to " violate the natural law of the two ſexes, and that of intelligent beings, it is the " buſineſs of the magiſtrate to make civil laws, which may overcome the nature " of the climate, and re-eſtabliſh the primitive laws of nature *." According to this way of reaſoning, a legiſlator is much to be blamed, who, like Lycurgus, eſtabliſhes conſtitutions which tend to break down that natural fence of modeſty, which is deſigned as a preſervative againſt incontinence. In this certainly M. de Monteſquieu has judged much better than another writer of the ſame nation, the author of the book De l'Eſprit, who ſeems to make the great art of legiſlation to conſiſt in giving a looſe to the moſt licentious inclinations, and propoſes the indulgence of them as a reward to merit, and an incentive to the nobleſt actions.

(*c*) Ariſt. Politic. lib. ii. cap. 9.

* L'Eſprit des Loix, vol. I. liv. xvi. chap. 12. p. 373, 374.

arts

arts and ſciences. And after ſome other ſtrokes of the like nature, he concludes, " Such were the manners and the genius of a people " admired and propoſed by all profane antiquity as a pattern of " wiſdom and virtue.—Telles etoient les mœurs et le genie d'un " peuple admiré et propoſé par toute l'antiquité profane, comme " un modele de ſageſſe et de vertu (*d*)."

The law and cuſtom of expoſing children, ſo contrary to the dictates of nature and humanity, was not peculiar to Lacedæmon, but was common in other parts of Greece, as well as among other nations. And it is reckoned as a ſingular thing among the Thebans, that the law forbade any Theban to expoſe his infant under pain of death (*e*). Even the moſt eminent philoſophers, in their treatiſes of laws, preſcribed or approved this unnatural practice. Plato would have it ordered by law, that men or women, who are paſt the age of getting and conceiving ſtrong children, ſhould take care that their offspring, if they ſhould have any, ſhould not come to the birth, or ſee the light; or if that ſhould happen, they ſhould expoſe them without nouriſhment (*f*). Ariſtotle expreſly ſays, that it ſhould be a law not to bring up or nouriſh any child that is weak or maimed: and that when the law of the country forbids to expoſe infants, it is neceſſary to limit the number of thoſe that ſhould be begotten: and if any one begets children above

(*d*) De l'Origine des Loix, des Arts, &c. tome III. p. 380.

(*e*) Ælian. Hiſtor. var. lib. ii. cap. 7.

(*f*) Plato Republ. lib. v. Oper. p. 461. edit. Lugd.

the

the number limited by the laws, he adviſes to procure abortion before the fœtus has life and ſenſe (*g*). Juſtly is this mentioned by Mr. Locke, as a remarkable inſtance to ſhew, that "reaſon "had failed mankind in a perfect rule, and reſolved not the "doubts that had riſen amongſt the ſtudious and thinking philo-"ſophers; nor had been able to convince the moſt civilized parts "of the world, that they had not given, nor could without a "crime take away the lives of their children, by expoſing "them (*h*)."

But what I would eſpecially take notice of as a palpable proof of the great corruption of the Greeks, both in their notions and practice, with regard to morals, is, that the moſt unnatural filthineſs was countenanced and encouraged, in ſeveral places, by their public laws, and almoſt every-where by their known cuſtoms.

It is a charge that has been often brought againſt them, that they were very much addicted to the impure love of boys. I am ſenſible there is a great authority againſt it. The learned Doctor, afterwards Archbiſhop Potter, in his excellent Greek Antiquities, has taken great pains to clear them from that charge; and ſeems willing to have it thought, that the love of boys, ſo generally allowed and practiſed among them, was perfectly innocent and virtuous. And it were to be wiſhed, for the honour of human nature, that it could be proved to be ſo. I am far from ſaying,

(*g*) Ariſt. Politic. lib. vii. cap. 16. Oper. tom. II. p. 447. edit. Pariſ.

(*h*) Locke's Reaſon. of Chriſt. in his Works, vol. II. p. 534. edit. 3d.

that

that the love of boys, for which the Greeks were ſo noted, was univerſally of the criminal and vicious kind. But that this moſt abominable and unnatural vice was very common among them, and, in ſome of their cities and ſtates, encouraged by their laws, admits of a clear proof. There need no other vouchers for it, than the authors produced by this learned writer himſelf. One of theſe authors is Maximus Tyrius. And it is obſervable, that, at the end of his tenth diſſertation, he celebrates it as a moſt heroic act of Ageſilaus, a more glorious conqueſt than any he had atchieved againſt the Perſians, and as more to be admired than the fortitude of Leonidas, who died for his country, that being in love with a beautiful Barbarian boy, he ſuffered it to go no farther than looking at him, and admiring him (*i*). Nothing could be more impertinent and abſurd than this encomium on Ageſilaus, if the Spartan love of boys was generally as pure and innocent as the ſame author in that very diſſertation repreſents it. The teſtimonies of Xenophon and Plutarch are produced to ſhew that the love of boys at Sparta, and which was preſcribed by the Laws of Lycurgus, was pure and laudable. But the prejudices theſe two great authors had in favour of the Lacedæmonians, the high opinion they entertained of their laws and cuſtoms, and their willingneſs

(*i*) Epictetus has a paſſage not unlike this in commendation of Socrates's extraordinary virtue. "Go to Socrates (ſays he) and ſee him lying by Alcibiades, yet "ſlighting his youth and beauty. Conſider what a victory he was conſcious of "obtaining! What an Olympic prize! So that, by heaven, one might juſtly "ſalute him; Hail! incredibly great, univerſal victor!" If this ſhameful vice had not been extremely common, even at Athens, Socrates's abſtaining from it could not have been celebrated, as it is here by Epictetus, as an act of virtue that deſerves the higheſt admiration. See Epictetus's Diſſert. book ii. ch. 18. ſect. 4.

to

to put the faireſt colours upon them, is well known, and does not a little weaken the force of their teſtimony. It will ſoon appear, that Plutarch is not very conſiſtent with himſelf in what he advances on this head. As to Xenophon, it is to be obſerved, that at the ſame time that he vindicates the Lacedæmonians, he repreſents that criminal love as very common among the Greeks, and in many places authorized by the laws: "I know (ſays he) that there "are many who will believe nothing of this;" i. e. that the love of boys among the Spartans was innocent and virtuous; "nor do "I wonder at it, the unnatural love of boys is become ſo common, "that in many places it is eſtabliſhed by the public laws." This teſtimony of Xenophon is very remarkable with regard to others of the Greeks, though he will not allow that the Lacedæmonians were guilty of it. But Plato, his cotemporary, whoſe teſtimony muſt be allowed to be of great weight, in his eighth book of laws, ſuppoſes that the maſculine love, which he there condemns as contrary to nature, was allowed both among the Lacedæmonians and the Cretans (*k*). The excellent writer above-mentioned will by no means allow that the love of boys uſual among the Cretans was criminal; and aſſerts, that nothing paſſed between them and their lovers that was contrary to the ſtricteſt rules of virtue: for which he quotes Maximus Tyrius and Strabo, who tell us, that the Cretans profeſſed that it was not ſo much the external beauty of a boy, as his virtuous diſpoſition, his courage and conduct, that recommended him to their love. And this might be the pretence they alledged; and in ſome inſtances might really be the caſe. But, I think, whoſoever

(*k*) Plato de Leg. lib. viii. Oper. p. 645. G. H. edit. Lugd.

impartially

impartially examines what Strabo ſays concerning it, will not be apt to look upon the love he there ſpeaks of as very innocent. The whole turn of the paſſage ſeems to me to have a contrary appearance. And I find the learned and ingenious author De l'Origine des Loix, &c. looks upon it in the ſame light, and cites this very paſſage of Strabo to ſhew that unnatural luſt was encouraged by the Cretan law. And Plutarch, at the ſame time that he repreſents the love of boys in uſe at Athens and Sparta as having nothing blameable in it, expreſly condemns that ſort of it in Crete, which they called by the name of ἀφπαγμος (*l*), which is that very love which Strabo ſpeaks of in the paſſage referred to (*m*). Plato, not only in the eighth book of laws already cited, but in his firſt book of laws, blames the Cretans for maſculine mixtures; and intimates, that they were wont to juſtify themſelves by the example of Jupiter and Ganymede (*n*). Ariſtotle tells us, that to prevent their having too many children, there was a law among the Cretans, for encouraging that ſort of unnatural love (*o*).

It appears from ſome paſſages of Plutarch, that he was willing to have it thought that the love of boys in uſe among the Greeks was a pure and generous affection: but at other times he makes acknowledgements which plainly ſhew the contrary. In his life

(*l*) Plutarch. de liber. educandis. Oper. tom. II. p. 11. edit. Xyl.

(*m*) Strabo, lib. x. p. 739, 740. edit. Amſt.

(*n*) Plato de Leg. lib. i. Oper. p. 569. G. edit. Lugd. 1590.

(*o*) Ariſt. Politic. lib. ii. cap. 10. Oper. tom. II. p. 333. A. edit. Pariſ. 1629.

of Pelopidas, he tells, that the legiſlators encouraged the love of boys, to temper the manners of their Youth, and that it produced excellent effects, and particularly among the Thebans. But the ſame great philoſopher, who undoubtedly was inclined to give a favourable account of the Thebans, whoſe countryman he was, in his treatiſe De liberis educandis, expreſly declares, that ſuch maſculine loves were to be avoided, as were in uſe at Thebes and Elis (*p*). And his joining Thebes with Elis ſhews that it is a very criminal paſſion he ſpeaks of. For we have the teſtimony of Maximus Tyrius, in that diſſertation in which he endeavours to vindicate ſome of the Græcian ſtates from the charge, that the Elians encouraged that licentiouſneſs, as he calls it, by a law (*q*). Nothing can be more evident than it is from Plutarch's treatiſe called Ἐρωτικὸς, or Amatorius, that this abominable vice had made a great progreſs among the Greeks, and was openly countenanced and pleaded for. One of his dialogiſts there argues for it at large, and highly commends it. He repreſents the Lacedæmonians, Bæotians, Cretans, and Chalcidians, as much addicted to it. And another of his dialogiſts, who, it is to be ſuppoſed, expreſſes Plutarch's own ſentiments, condemns it in very ſtrong terms, and ſhews its pernicious effects. Athenæus tells us, that it was not only practiſed, but encouraged and promoted in many of the cities of Greece (*r*). At Athens indeed there was a law againſt it. And Plutarch ſeems to recommend the love of boys

(*p*) Plutarch. ubi ſupra, p. 11.

(*q*) Max. Tyr. Diſſert. 10. p. 128. Oxon. 1677.

(*r*) Deipnoſoph. lib. xiii. p. 602. edit. Lugd.

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in uſe at Sparta and Athens as virtuous, and worthy to be emulated, though he condemns that at Thebes and Elis (*s*). As to Sparta, the accounts given of it by antient authors, and by Plutarch himſelf, ſeem to vary. But, whatever might have been the original deſign of the conſtitution eſtabliſhed by Lycurgus with reſpect to it, there is too much reaſon to think, that, as it was generally practiſed among the Lacedæmonians, it was not very innocent. With regard to the Athenians, Plutarch tells us concerning their great lawgiver Solon, that it appears from his poems, that he was not proof againſt beautiful boys, and had not courage enough to reſiſt the force of love. He obſerves, that he was in love with Piſiſtratus, becauſe of his extraordinary handſomeneſs: and that by a law he forbade pæderaſty or the love of boys to ſlaves; making that, as Plutarch obſerves, an honourable and reputable action; and as it were inviting the worthy to the practice of that which he commanded the unworthy to forbear (*t*). And in his Amatorius above referred to, he introduces Protogenes, one of his dialogiſts, arguing in favour of that practice, from this conſtitution of Solon (*u*). Maximus Tyrius, who takes a great deal of pains to vindicate Socrates from that charge, owns, that at the time when this philoſopher flouriſhed, this vicious paſſion had arrived to the greateſt height, both in other parts of Greece, and particularly at Athens; and that all places were full of unjuſt or wicked lovers, and boys that were enticed and deluded (*x*).

(*s*) Plutarch. ubi ſupra.

(*t*) Plutarch. See Plutarch's Life of Solon, at the beginning.

(*u*) Plutarch. Oper. tom. II. p. 751. edit Xyland.

(*x*) Max. Tyr. diſſert 10. initio.

So that if there was a law againſt it at Athens, it ſeems to have been little regarded.

To the teſtimonies which have been produced may be added that of Cicero, who repreſents that practice as very common among the Greeks: and that what helped to introduce and ſpread it, was the cuſtom of the youths appearing naked in the public exerciſes. And he obſerves, that their poets, great men, and even their learned men and philoſophers, not only practiſed, but gloried in it (*y*). And accordingly he elſewhere repreſents it as the cuſtom, not of particular cities only, but of Greece in general. Speaking of the things that might be thought to contribute to Dionyſius's happineſs, he mentions his having paramours of that kind "according "to the cuſtom of Greece.—Habebat, more Græciæ, quoſdam "adoleſcentes amore conjunctos (*z*)." And in a paſſage cited by Lactantius, he mentions it as a bold and hazardous thing in the Greeks, that they conſecrated the images of the Loves and Cupids in the places of their public exerciſes (*a*).

I have inſiſted the more largely upon this, becauſe there cannot be a more convincing proof, that the laws and cuſtoms, even in the moſt learned and civilized nations, are not to be depended upon as proper guides in matters of morality. The Greeks are

(*y*) Tuſcul. Diſput. lib. iv. cap. 33.

(*z*) Ibid. lib. v. cap. 20. p. 385. edit. Davis.

(*a*) "Magnum Cicero audaxque conſilium ſuſcepiſſe Græciam dicit, quod Cu-"pidinum et Amorum ſimulachræ in gymnaſiis conſecraſſet." Lactant. Divin. Inſtit. lib. i. cap. 20. p. 106. Lugd. Bat. 1660.

regarded

regarded and admired as the moſt eminent of the Pagan nations, for their knowledge in philoſophy, and eſpecially in morals, and as having cultivated their reaſon in an extraordinary degree. They valued themſelves mightily upon their wiſdom, and the excellency of their laws; and yet their laws, or generally allowed cuſtoms, ſhewed that they were become amazingly corrupt, both in their notions and practices, with regard to morals; and that in inſtances, as to which one would have thought the light of nature would have given them a ſufficient direction. I ſay, they were become very corrupt in their notions as well as practices. For though ſome of them acknowledged the evil and turpitude of that unnatural vice, yet, in the general opinion, it ſeems to have paſſed among them for no fault at all, or a very light one. And many of their philoſophers and moraliſts, as I ſhall have occaſion to ſhew afterwards, repreſented it as a matter perfectly indifferent. Baroleſanes, an antient and learned writer, in a large extract quoted from him by Euſebius, after having mentioned ſome barbarous nations, which were much addicted to that vice, and others who had it in abhorrence, obſerves, that in Greece ſuch kind of maſculine loves were not accounted diſgraceful, even to the wife (*b*). St. Paul, therefore, in drawing up his charge of an amazing corruption of morals in the Heathen world, very juſtly puts this in the firſt place, as being both of the higheſt enormity, and very common not only among the people, but the philoſophers themſelves. Nor is it probable, that any thing leſs than a Divine Law, enforced by the

(*b*) Euſeb. Præp. Evangel. lib. vi. cap. 10. p. 276. D.

authority

authority of God himſelf, and by the moſt expreſs denunciations of the Divine Wrath and Vengeance againſt ſuch crimes, could have over-ruled the force of ſuch inveterate cuſtom and example, countenanced by the maxims and practice of thoſe who made high pretences to wiſdom and reaſon.

CHAP.

CHAP. IV.

Farther inſtances of civil laws and cuſtoms among the Pagan nations. Thoſe of the antient Romans conſidered. The laws of the twelve tables, though mightily extolled, were far from exhibiting a complete rule of morals. The law of Romulus concerning the expoſing of diſeaſed and deformed children. This continued to be practiſed among the Romans. Their cruel treatment of their ſlaves. Their gladiatory ſhews contrary to humanity. Unnatural luſts common among them as well as the Greeks. Obſervations on the Chineſe laws and cuſtoms. Other laws and cuſtoms of nations mentioned, which are contrary to good morals.

FROM the Greeks let us paſs to the Romans, whoſe good policy and government has been greatly admired, and who have been regarded as the moſt virtuous of all the Pagan nations. And it muſt be owned, that in the moſt antient times of the Roman ſtate, they were free from thoſe vices which luxury and effeminacy are apt to produce. There were ſhining examples among them of probity, juſtice, fidelity, fortitude, a contempt of pleaſures and riches, and love to their country. But the body of the people were rude and ignorant to a great degree, ſunk in an idolatry and ſuperſtition, than which nothing could be more groſs and ſtupid. Their virtue was rough and ſavage: they made glory

glory to conſiſt chiefly in military bravery: and their love to their country was, for the moſt part, only a ſtrong paſſion for rendering it the miſtreſs of all others. To this they made every thing give way; and often broke through the rules of juſtice and equity, to promote what they thought the intereſt of the ſtate; jealous of any people, that were for preſerving themſelves in a ſtate of liberty and independency. To which it may be added, that they were for a long time without a written code of laws. And the people ſuffered ſo much by the injuſtice, inſolence, and arbitrary oppreſſion of their magiſtrates and great men, even in what are accounted the moſt virtuous times of the republic, that they inſiſted very juſtly upon having a written body of laws, which ſhould be the ſtanding rule of judgment. This was accordingly accompliſhed. Select perſons were choſen to collect and compile laws for the commonwealth, who travelled into Greece for that purpoſe; and with great ſagacity choſe the beſt inſtitutions of the Græcian ſtates, and other nations. Hence came the famous laws of the twelve tables, which have been ſo much celebrated both by antients and moderns. Cicero, who was certainly a very able judge, frequently ſpeaks of them in terms of the higheſt approbation. And particularly, in his firſt book De Oratore, in the perſon of that great lawyer and orator L. Craſſus. He not only prefers them to all other civil laws and conſtitutions, particularly to thoſe of the Greeks, but to all the writings of the philoſophers. He makes no ſcruple to declare, that though all men ſhould be diſpleaſed at him for it, he would freely own it as his opinion, "That the ſingle book of the twelve tables was ſuperior to the "libraries

" libraries of all the philoſophers, both in the weight of its au-
" thority, and in the abundant utility ariſing from it (*c*)."

But however thoſe laws might deſerve great praiſe, conſidered as good civil conſtitutions, I believe there are few that will pretend, that they exhibited a perfect rule of morals, or gave men a clear and full direction as to every branch of their duty. That part of thoſe laws which related to ſacred things, was evidently calculated, like the laws of other Heathen nations, to uphold the public idolatry and polytheiſm. The body of theſe laws was deſigned to regulate the conduct of the citizens towards the public, and towards one another, to ſettle men's private rights, and to be the rule of judgment for the regulation of the civil policy, and for the ſecurity and advantage of the ſtate. And many of their conſtitutions were undoubtedly excellent, taken in this view; but, like other civil laws, could be of no great force for regulating the inward temper and diſpoſitions of the mind. Monſ. de Monteſquieu obſerves, that there was an extreme ſeverity in ſeveral of their laws, ſuitable to the rudeneſs and rigidity of the antient Romans. The law concerning debtors is mentioned by ſeveral authors, and was remarkable for its inhumanity. The creditor was allowed to keep the debtor in cloſe confinement ſixty days; and afterwards, in caſe he did not pay the debt within the time preſcribed by the law, or find ſufficient ſecurity, he was condemned to loſe his

(*c*) " Fremant omnes licet, dicam quod ſentiam, bibliothecas omnium philoſo-
" phorum, unus mihi videtur duodecim tabularum libellus, ſiquis legum fontes
" et capita viderit, ut authoritatis pondere et utilitatis ubertate ſuperare." Cic. de Orat. lib. i. cap. 42, 43.

head, or to be ſold as a ſlave. This might ſeem to be ſevere enough, but the law went farther ſtill, and permitted the creditors, if there were ſeveral of them, to cut the dead body of the debtor in pieces, and divide it among them. Nothing can excuſe the barbarity of this law, even ſuppoſing it to have been deſigned only in terrorem. And indeed the laſt part of it was ſo ſhocking, that we are told there was no inſtance of its being put in execution, but it fell, and was abrogated by diſuſe (*d*).

Dionyſius Halicarnaſſeus, who was a great admirer of the inſtitutions of the antient Romans, informs us, that Romulus obliged the citizens to bring up all their male children, and the eldeſt of the females. They were allowed, therefore, to deſtroy all their female children but the eldeſt. And even with regard to their male children, if they were deformed or monſtrous, he permitted the parents to expoſe them, after having ſhewn them to five of their neareſt neighbours (*e*). There is a paſſage in Cicero's third book of laws, from which it has been concluded, that the law of Romulus with regard to the expoſing and deſtroying male children that were remarkably deformed, was confirmed by a conſtitution of the twelve tables (*f*). A very learned writer has taken notice of a remarkable paſſage in Terence, from which it appears, that this inhuman cuſtom of expoſing and deſtroying

(*d*) Quintilian takes notice of this law, lib. v. cap. 6. So does A. Gellius. And Tertullian refers to it, Apol. cap. 4.

(*e*) Dion. Halic. Roman Antiquities, lib. ii.

(*f*) Cic. de Leg. lib. iii. cap. 8. p. 207. where ſee Dr. Davis's note.

children,

children, eſpecially females, was not uncommon, even among parents of the beſt characters. After having obſerved, that " of " all the moral painters, Terence is he who ſeems to have copied " human nature moſt exactly," he adds, that " yet his man of " univerſal benevolence, whom he draws with ſo much life in " that maſterly ſtroke, Homo ſum, humani nihil à me alienum " puto, is the ſame perſon who commands his wife to expoſe his " new-born daughter, and flies into a paſſion with her, for having " committed that hard taſk to another, by which means the infant " eſcaped death.—Si meum imperium exequi voluiſſes, interemp- " tam oportuit.—And he [Chremes] characterizes ſuch who had " any remains of this natural inſtinct as perſons—qui neque jus, " neque bonum atque æquum ſciunt (*g*)." Such were the ſentiments publiſhed with applauſe on the Roman theatre. And it appears from a paſſage of Seneca, that ſo late as in his time, it was uſual among the Romans to deſtroy weak and deformed children. " Portentoſos fœtus extinguimus: liberos quoque, ſi debiles mon- " ſtroſique editi ſunt, mergimus (*h*)."

The cruelty of the Lacedæmonians towards their ſlaves has been taken notice of. The laws and cuſtoms of the Romans, with reſpect to them, were little better. It was not unuſual for the maſters to put their old, ſick, and infirm ſlaves into an iſland in the Tyber, where they left them to periſh. And ſo far did ſome of them

(*g*) Divine Legation of Moſes, vol. I. book i. ſect. 4. p. 58. marg. note, edit. 4th.

(*h*) Sen. de Ira, lib. i. cap. 15.

carry their luxury and wantonneſs, as to drown their ſlaves in the fiſh-ponds, that they might be devoured by the fiſh, to make their fleſh more delicate (*i*). The cuſtom of gladiatory ſhows, which obtained univerſally among the Romans, even when they were famous for the politer arts, and were thought to give a pattern of good government to other nations, was alſo contrary to the rules of humanity. They were exhibited at the funerals of great and rich men, and on many other occaſions, by the Roman conſuls, prætors, ædiles, ſenators, knights, prieſts, and almoſt all that bore great offices in the ſtate, as well as by the emperors; and in general by all that had a mind to make an intereſt with the people, who were extravagantly fond of thoſe kinds of ſhows. Not only the men, but the women ran eagerly after them, who were, by the prevalence of cuſtom, ſo far diveſted of that compaſſion and ſoftneſs which is natural to the ſex, that they took a pleaſure in ſeeing them kill one another, and only deſired that they ſhould fall genteelly, and in an agreeable attitude. Such was the frequency of theſe ſhows, and ſo great the number of men that were killed on theſe occaſions, that Lipſius ſays, no war cauſed ſuch ſlaughter of mankind, as did theſe ſports of pleaſure, throughout the ſeveral provinces of the vaſt Roman empire.

That odious and unnatural vice, which (as has been ſhewn) prevailed too much in Greece, was alſo common among the Romans, eſpecially in the latter times of their ſtate. Many paſſages might be produced from their poets, which plainly refer to it.

(*i*) See L'Eſprit, diſc. 2. chap. 24.

To which I ſhall add what a learned author obſerves, that " Cicero introduces, without any mark of diſapprobation, Cotta, " a man of the firſt rank and genius, freely and familiarly owning " to other Romans of the ſame quality, that worſe than beaſtly " vice, as practiſed by himſelf, and quoting the authority of an- " tient philoſophers in vindication of it (*k*)." It appears from what Seneca ſays, in his 95th epiſtle, that in his time it was practiſed at Rome openly, and without ſhame. He there ſpeaks of flocks and troops of boys, diſtinguiſhed by their colours and nations; and that great care was taken to train them up for that deteſtable employment (*l*).

It is not neceſſary to add any thing more to ſhew, that among the Greeks and Romans, the moſt celebrated nations in the antient Pagan world, their laws and conſtitutions, though in many reſpects excellent, were far from exhibiting a proper rule of morals to guide the people: they failed in very important inſtances: and ſome of the cuſtoms, which at length became very prevalent among them, were of a moſt immoral nature and tendency, and

(*k*) Dr. Tailour's Notes and Paraphraſe on the Epiſtle to the Romans, on chap. i. 26. " Quotus enim quiſque formoſus eſt? Athenis cum eſſem, egregibus " Ephæborum vix ſinguli reperiebantur. Video quid ſubriſeris. Sed tamen ita ſe " res habet. Deinde nobis, qui concedentibus philoſophii adoleſcentulis delecta- " mur, etiam vitia ſæpe jucunda ſunt." And he immediately after mentions Alcæus's being pleaſed with a blemiſh in the boy he was in love with; and Q. Catulus's being in love with Roſcius, who had diſtorted eyes. Cic. de Nat. Deor. lib. i. cap. 28.

(*l*) " Puerorum infelicium greges, agmina exoletorum, per nationes coloreſque " deſcripta," &c. Ep. 95.

ſhewed

ſhewed them to be ſunk into an amazing corruption and depravity of manners.

It may not be improper, on this occaſion, to take notice of the Chineſe, who have been mightily extolled for their antiquity, the extent of their empire, the wiſdom and excellency of their laws and conſtitutions, and the goodneſs of their morals. A noted author, who has diſtinguiſhed himſelf in aſſerting the clearneſs and ſufficiency of the Law and Religion of Nature in oppoſition to Revelation, lays a particular ſtreſs upon this. He repreſents "the infidels of China (as he calls them) as having the preference "to Chriſtians in relation to all moral virtues." And he tells us, from the famous Mr. Leibnitz, that "ſuch is our growing cor-"ruption, that it may almoſt ſeem neceſſary to ſend ſome Chineſe "miſſionaries to teach us the uſe and practice of Natural Theo-"logy, as we ſend miſſionaries to them to teach them Revealed "Religion (*m*)." But if we take their laws and conſtitutions in the moſt advantageous light, it muſt be owned, indeed, that they are well calculated for preſerving external public order and decency, and for the regulation of the civil polity, but are altogether inſufficient to furniſh a complete rule of morals, or to lead men into the practice of real piety and virtue, conſidered in its juſt extent. F. Navarette, who lived many years in China, and was well acquainted with their language, their laws, and books, and who ſeems to have given an honeſt and impartial account of

(*m*) Chriſtianity as old as the Creation, p. 366, 367. edit. 8vo.

them

them (*n*), ſays, that " he believes the outward behaviour is not " taken care of ſo much in any part of the world, as it is in " China: that whatever they do or ſay is ſo contrived, that it may " have a good appearance, pleaſe all, and offend none: and that " doubtleſs that nation excels all others in outward modeſty, gra- " vity, good words, courteſy, and civility (*o*)." Yet what he ſays of them in ſeveral parts of his book, gives one a very diſadvantageous idea of their morals. He repreſents the ſin againſt nature as extremely common among them: and that in the time of the former Chineſe emperors, there were public ſtews of this kind at Pequin, though not now allowed by the Tartars (*p*). That they do not look upon drunkenneſs to be a crime (*q*). That every one takes as many concubines as he can keep (*r*). That many of the common people pawn their wives in time of need, and ſome lend them for a month, or more, or leſs, according as they agree (*s*). That there are many things in China which make matrimony void, ſome of them very trifling. He quotes a book

(*n*) I do not find that Father Navarette's name appears in the liſt of the authors, whoſe names are prefixed to F. Du Halde's Hiſtory of China, and out of whoſe accounts he compiled his hiſtory. But as he found fault with the wrong and partial accounts given by ſeveral authors of the ſociety, I ſuppoſe it was thought proper to take no notice of him; though he well deſerved to have been mentioned among the beſt of thoſe who have given accounts of China.

(*o*) See Navarette's Account of the Empire of China, book ii. chap. 7. p. 122, 123. in the firſt volume of Churchill's Collection.

(*p*) Ibid. book i. chap. 13. p. 29. and book ii. p. 68.

(*q*) Ibid. book i. chap. 15.

(*r*) Ibid. book ii. chap. 7. p. 68.

(*s*) Ibid.

of

of great authority among them, in which it is ſaid, concerning the antient wiſe men of China, who are there celebrated as men of greater ſincerity and virtue than the moderns, that they turned away their wives, becauſe the houſe was full of ſmoke, or becauſe they frightened the dog with their diſagreeable noiſe. And that the antients diſſolved the knot of matrimony without a word ſpeaking. In the ſame book it is determined, that when the wife is turned off, the huſband may marry another (*t*). F. Navarette farther obſerves, that the Chineſe ſell their ſons and daughters when they pleaſe, and do it frequently (*u*). But what is ſtill worſe, very many of them, rich as well as poor, when they are delivered of daughters, ſtifle and kill them. Thoſe who are more tender-hearted leave them under a veſſel, where they let them die in great miſery: of which he gives a moſt affecting inſtance to his own knowledge. And he ſays, it was the common opinion, that there were about ten thouſand female children murdered every year within the precincts of the city Lao Ki, where he lived ſome time. " How many then (ſays he) muſt " we imagine periſhed throughout the whole empire (*x*)?" Yet, he ſays, " all the ſects among them, except that of the learned, " think it a ſin to kill living creatures: they plead humanity and " compaſſion, thinking it a cruel thing to take that life which " they cannot give. But it is very well worth remarking (ſays

(*t*) Navarette's Account of the Empire of China, book ii. chap. 7. p. 67.

(*u*) Ibid. book i. chap. 20. p. 47.

(*x*) Ibid. book ii. chap. 10. p. 77.

" he)

" he) that they ſhould endeavour to ſhew themſelves merciful " to beaſts, yet murder their own daughters." He adds, that " in India they have hoſpitals for all ſorts of irrational creatures, " and yet they let men die without aſſiſting them in their ſick- " neſs (*y*)." Many have talked of the brotherly affection and benevolence of the Chineſe towards one another; but it appears, from the ſame writer, that though they carry a fair appearance, and " are exquiſite at concealing the mortal hatred they bear any " man for ſeveral years, yet, when an opportunity offers, they " give full vent to it. It often happens, that in law ſuits, the " defendant hangs himſelf, only to ruin and avenge himſelf of " the plaintiff: for when he is hanged, all his kindred repair to " the judge, complaining that he hanged himſelf to avoid the " trouble and vexation the plaintiff put him to, having no other " remedy leſt him. Then all join againſt the plaintiff, and the " judge among them; and they never give over, till they ruin " him and all his family (*z*)." Father Trigantius, and from him Cornelius à Lapide, ſay, concerning the Chineſe, that " they " wonderfully follow the track of nature and reaſon, and are " courteous, and apt to learn, as well as ingenious and great po- " liticians, and therefore very capable of Chriſtian wiſdom," &c.

(*y*) Navarette's Account of the Empire of China, book ii. chap. 10. p. 77.

(*z*) Ibid. book i. chap. 20. p. 47. What Navarette here ſays concerning the litigiouſneſs of the Chineſe, is confirmed by the teſtimony of the Jeſuits, who compiled the Scientia Sinenſis Latine expoſita. They obſerve, that there is an infinite number of law ſuits in China, and every-where a thouſand arts of cheating, of which all the tribunals are full. " Infinitus litium et litigantium in Chinâ " hodie eſt numerus; mille paſſim fallendi fingendive artes, quibus tribunalia " omnia plena ſunt." Scient. Sin. lib. i. p. 12.

F. Navarette, who mentions this, remarks upon it, that " if their " being ſo addicted to ſuperſtitions, ſodomy, fraud, lying, pride, " covetouſneſs, ſenſuality, and other vices, is following the courſe " of nature and reaſon, then that father was in the right (*a*)." To what has been produced from F. Navarette, I would add, that an author of great reputation for political knowledge has obſerved, that " the Chineſe, whoſe whole life is entirely governed by the " eſtabliſhed rites, are the moſt void of common honeſty of any " people upon earth ;—le peuple le plus fourbe de la terre ;" and that the laws, though they do not allow them to rob or to ſpoil by violence, yet permit them to cheat and to defraud (*b*). Agreeable to this is the character given of them in Lord Anſon's Voyages, where there are ſtriking inſtances of the general diſpoſition that is among them to commit all kinds of fraud.

It were eaſy to produce ſeveral other laws and cuſtoms of different nations contrary to the rules of morality. Some nations there have been, among whom theft and robbery was accounted honourable. Others gave a full indulgence by law to all manner of impurity and licentiouſneſs, both in men and women. Others, as the Perſians, allowed the moſt inceſtuous mixtures. And there were ſeveral nations, among whom it was uſual to expoſe and deſtroy their neareſt friends and relatives, and even their parents, when they grew old and very ſick, eſteeming thoſe to be moſt

(*a*) Navarette's Account of the Empire of China, book v. p. 173.

(*b*) L'Eſprit des Loix, vol. I. liv. xix. chap. 17. p. 437. et ibid. chap. 20. p. 440, 441. edit. Edinb.

miſerable who died a natural death (*c*). Euſebius gives ſeveral other inſtances of abſurd and immoral laws and cuſtoms, which obtained among many people before the light of the Goſpel ſhone amongſt them. But he obſerves, that no ſooner did any of them embrace Chriſtianity, but they abandoned thoſe laws and cuſtoms, which nothing could prevail with them to do before. And this he juſtly mentions as a proof of the happy effects produced by the Goſpel, in reforming the manners of men (*d*).

The ſame learned father has a long extract from Burdeſanes, an eminent antient writer, concerning the various cuſtoms and laws in different nations, partly written, and partly unwritten, ſome of which were good and laudable, others of an immoral nature and tendency. It is too long to be tranſcribed here, but may be ſeen in the ſixth book of Euſebius's Evangelical Preparation, cap. 10. p. 175. et ſeq. The reader may alſo conſult Sextus Empiricus, Pyrrhon. Hypotyp. lib. iii. cap. 24. and a modern author, who has made a large collection of abſurd and ſhameful laws and cuſtoms in ſeveral nations, antient and modern, eſpecially ſuch as tend to encourage all manner of lewdneſs and

(*c*) The author of a late periodical paper, publiſhed at Paris, intituled, Le Conſervateur, pleads in favour of the laws of thoſe nations, which ordered old and infirm perſons to be put to death. He pretends, that there is nothing in this, but what is conformable to reaſon, though he owns it is not reconcileable to the Goſpel. And he thinks it would be fit and reaſonable, to determine by law the term beyond which perſons ſhould not be ſuffered to live. Le Conſervateur for March 1757, as cited by the Abbé Gauchet, in his Lettres Critiques. An inſtance this, among many others that might be mentioned, of the extravagancies men are apt to fall into, through a high opinion of their own reaſon.

(*d*) Præpar. Evangel. lib. i. cap. 4. p. 11, 12. edit. Paris.

debauchery (*e*). It is eaſy to obſerve, that this laſt-mentioned writer enlarges upon ſome of thoſe laws and cuſtoms, which are contrary to all the rules of modeſty and purity, in a manner which ſhews that he is far from diſapproving them, and ſeems rather to recommend them as models of a wiſe legiſlation. We may ſee by this what fine ſyſtems of legiſlation might be expected from ſome of thoſe, who make the higheſt pretences to any extraordinary ſagacity; and what an advantage it is, not to be left merely to what men's boaſted reaſon, which is too often guided and influenced by their paſſions, would be apt to dictate in morals.

I ſhall conclude what relates to the laws and cuſtoms of the Pagan nations, with obſerving, that Lord Bolingbroke, who, as hath been already hinted, ſeems to lay the principal ſtreſs on human laws, as furniſhing the moſt effectual means for promoting and ſecuring the practice of virtue, yet has thought fit to own, that "the law of nature has been blended with many abſurd and contradictory laws in all ages and countries, as well as with cuſtoms, which, if they were independent on laws, have obtained the force of laws (*f*) The ſame noble writer, who frequently repreſents the law of nature as univerſally clear and obvious to all mankind, has made this remarkable acknowledgment, that "the law of nature is hid from our ſight by all the

(*e*) L'Eſprit, tome I. diſc. 2. chap. 14 et 15.

(*f*) Bolingbroke's Works, vol. V. p. 15. edit. 4to.

"variegated

" variegated clouds of civil laws and cuſtoms. Some gleams of " true light may be ſeen through them, but they render it a " dubious light, and it can be no better to thoſe who have the " keeneſt ſight, till thoſe interpoſitions are removed (*g*)." It may not be improper here to add a paſſage or two from a celebrated antient, relating to civil laws. Cicero declares, that " the " commands and prohibitions of human laws have not a ſufficient " force, either to engage men to right actions, or avert them " from bad ones.—Intelligi ſic oportet, juſſa ac vetita populorum " vim non habere ad rectè facta vocandi, et a peccatis avo- " candi (*h*)." And he pronounces, that " it would be the " greateſt folly to imagine, that all thoſe things are juſt which " are contained in popular inſtitutions and laws.—Illud ſtultiſſi- " mum exiſtimare omnia juſta eſſe, quæ ſita ſunt in populorum " inſtitutis aut legibus (*i*)."

Thus it appears, with great evidence, that the civil laws and conſtitutions in the Pagan world were far from affording a ſafe and certain rule, which might be depended upon, for the direction of the people in moral duty.

As to the myſteries of which a very eminent writer has made a beautiful repreſentation, as an excellent expedient contrived by

(*g*) Bolingbroke's Works, Vol. V. p. 105. edit. 4to.

(*h*) De Leg. lib. i. cap. 4.

(*i*) Ibid. cap. 15.

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the legiſlators and civil magiſtrates, for reclaiming the people from their idolatry and polytheiſm, and engaging them to a life of the ſtricteſt virtue, I need not here add any thing to what is offered on this ſubject in the former volume (*k*). It is there ſhewn, that there is no ſufficient reaſon to think that the myſteries were intended to detect the error of the vulgar polytheiſm, but rather on the contrary, by ſtriking ſhows and repreſentations, to create a greater awe and veneration for the religion of their country. And as to morals, notwithſtanding the high pretenſions of ſome Pagan writers, eſpecially after Chriſtianity had made ſome progreſs, it does not appear, that the original deſign of them went farther, than the humanizing and civilizing the people, and encouraging them to the practice of thoſe virtues, and deterring them from thoſe vices, which more immediately affect ſociety. It will ſcarce, I believe, be pretended, that admitting the moſt favourable account of the myſteries, the people were there inſtructed in a complete body of morals. But the truth is, there were great defects and faults in the original conſtitution of them, which naturally gave occaſion to corruptions and abuſes, which began early, and continued long; ſo that it is to be feared, the myſteries, as they were managed, greatly contributed to that amazing depravation of manners, which, like a deluge, overſpread the Pagan world. It is obſerved by the celebrated author above referred to, that " God, in puniſhment ' for turning his " Truth into a lie,' ſuffered their myſteries, which they erected

(*k*) See vol. I. chap. viii and ix.

" for

" for a ſchool of virtue, to degenerate into an odious ſink of " vice and immorality, giving them up unto all uncleanneſs and " vile affections (*l*)."

(*l*) Divine Legation of Moſes, vol. I. book ii. ſect. 4. p. 196. marginal note, edit. 4th.

CHAP.

CHAP. V.

Concerning morality as taught by the antient Heathen philoſophers. Some of them ſaid excellent things concerning moral virtue, and their writings might in ſeveral reſpects be of great uſe. But they could not furniſh a perfect rule of morals, that had ſufficient certainty, clearneſs, and authority. No one philoſopher, or ſect of philoſophers, can be abſolutely depended upon as a proper guide in matters of morality. Nor is a complete ſyſtem of morals to be extracted from the writings of them all collectively conſidered. The vanity of ſuch an attempt ſhewn. Their ſentiments, how excellent ſoever, could not properly paſs for laws to mankind.

THOUGH the civil laws and conſtitutions, or thoſe cuſtoms which obtained the force of laws, in the Heathen world, could not furniſh out a rule of morality, which might be depended upon, to guide men to the true knowledge and practice of moral duty in its juſt extent, yet it may be alledged, that the inſtructions and precepts of the philoſophers were, if duly attended to, ſufficient for that purpoſe. This is what many have inſiſted on, to ſhew that there was no need of an extraordinary Divine Revelation to give men a complete rule of moral duty. It is well known what praiſes many of the antients have beſtowed on philoſophy, and that they have particularly extolled its great uſefulneſs and excellency with regard to morals. Cicero has

ſeveral

ſeveral remarkable paſſages to this purpoſe (*m*). He ſays, that " philoſophy is the culture of the mind, and plucketh up vice " by the roots: that it is the medicine of the ſoul, and healeth " the minds of men: that from thence, if we would be good " and happy, we may draw all proper helps and aſſiſtances for " leading virtuous and happy lives: that the correction of all our " vices and ſins is to be ſought for from philoſophy." And he breaks forth into that rapturous encomium upon it: " O philo- " ſophy, the guide of life! the ſearcher out of virtue, and ex- " peller of vice! What ſhould we be, nay, what would the " human life be without thee! Thou waſt the inventreſs of " laws, the miſtreſs or teacher of manners and diſcipline. To " thee we flee: from thee we beg aſſiſtance. And one day " ſpent according to thy precepts is preferable to an immortality " ſpent in ſin." Seneca ſays, that " philoſophy is the ſtudy of " virtue (*n*)." And ſome of the moderns have come little behind the antients, in the admiration they have expreſſed for the Heathen moral philoſophy.

(*m*) " Cultura animi philoſophia eſt, hæc extrahit vitia radicitùs: eſt profectò " animi medicina philoſophia, medetur animis: ab eâ, ſi et boni et beati volumus " eſſe, omnia adjumenta et auxilia petemus benè beatèque vivendi: vitiorum pec- " catorumque noſtrorum, omnis à philoſophiâ petenda correctio eſt. O vitæ phi- " loſophia dux! virtutis indagatrix, expultrixque vitiorum! Quid non modo " nos, ſed omnino vita hominum, ſine te eſſe potuiſſet! Tu inventrix legum, tu " magiſtra morum et diſciplinæ fuiſti. Ad te confugimus: à te opem petemus. " Eſt autem unus dies benè et ex præceptis tuis actus, peccanti immortalitati ante- " ponendus." See Cicero Tuſcul. Diſput. lib. ii. cap. 4 et 5. lib. iii. cap. 3. lib. iv. cap. 38. but eſpecially ibid. lib. v. cap. 2.

(*n*) " Philoſophia ſtudium virtutis eſt." Sen. epiſt. 89. et epiſt. 90.

I am far from endeavouring to detract from the praiſes which are juſtly due to the antient philoſophers and moraliſts among the Pagans. Admirable paſſages are to be found in their writings. They ſpeak nobly concerning the dignity and beauty of virtue, and the tendency it hath to promote the perfection and happineſs of the human nature: and concerning the turpitude and deformity of vice, and the miſery that attends it. They give uſeful and excellent directions as to many particular virtues, and ſhew the reaſons upon which they are founded, in a manner which tends to recommend them to the eſteem and practice of mankind. And I doubt not ſome of them were uſeful inſtruments, under the direction and aſſiſtance of Divine Providence, for preſerving among men an eſteem and approbation of virtue, for ſtrengthening and improving their moral ſenſe, and giving them, in many inſtances, a clearer diſcernment of the moral reaſons and differences of things.

But it will by no means follow from this, that therefore mankind ſtood in no need of a Divine Revelation, to ſet before them a clear and certain rule of duty, in its juſt extent, and enforce it upon them by a Divine Authority. It hath been confidently aſſerted, by thoſe that extol what they call Natural Religion in oppoſition to Revelation, that "there is no one moral virtue, which "has not been taught, explained, and proved by the Heathen "philoſophers, both occaſionally and purpoſely." And that "there is no moral precept in the whole Goſpel, which was not "taught by the philoſophers (*o*)." The ſame thing has been

(*o*) Bolingbroke's Works, vol. V. p. 205, 206. 218. edit. 410.

ſaid

ſaid by other writers of a different character, and who aſſert the Divine Original and Authority of the Goſpel Revelation. The learned Dr. Meric Caſaubon, in his preface to his tranſlation of Antoninus's Meditations, expreſſes himſelf thus: " I muſt needs " ſay, that if we eſteem that natural, which natural men of beſt " account, by the mere ſtrength of human reaſon, have taught " and taken upon them to maintain as juſt and reaſonable, I " know not any evangelical precept or duty, belonging to a Chri- " ſtian's practice (even the harſheſt, and thoſe that ſeem to or- " dinary men moſt contrary to fleſh and blood not excepted) but " upon due ſearch and examination will prove of that nature." In like manner, another learned and ingenious writer has lately aſſerted, that " there is not any one principle, or any one practice " of morality, which may not be known by Natural Reaſon with- " out Revelation. By Reaſon we may come at a certainty of the " Exiſtence of God, and of his Providence, his Juſtice, Mercy, " and Truth: by that we may trace out our duty to him, and " may diſcover a future ſtate of rewards and puniſhments: by " that we may come at the knowledge of ſuch truths as relate " to our neighbours, and the correſponding duties to them: what " we are to do in ſocial life; how we are to behave towards go- " vernors, and what obedience is to be paid in the civil ſtate: " wherein true happineſs conſiſts, and what it is that muſt lead " to it; and what we ought to do in our private relations. Theſe " and ſuch like points may be traced out by Natural Reaſon; nor " do I know of any one point of duty towards God or man, but " what reaſon will ſuggeſt, and ſupply us with proper motives to

" do it (*p*)." He afterwards obſerves, that " as the powers of " Reaſon are ſufficient in themſelves to diſcover all and every " duty, and likewiſe to diſcover proper and ſufficient motives to " do them, Revelation may add many more; and if ſo, it muſt " be deemed by them that have it a ſingular advantage (*q*)." We ſee here, that this learned writer aſſerts, that the powers of Reaſon alone, without any aſſiſtance from Revelation, are ſufficient to diſcover all and every duty towards God, our neighbours, and ourſelves, and alſo to ſupply proper and ſufficient motives to do them: and all that he leaves to Divine Revelation, is not to make a diſcovery of any part of our duty, but only to furniſh ſome additional motives to duty, beſides what the light of our own unaſſiſted Reaſon is able of itſelf to diſcover. I readily allow, that if Revelation did no more than this, it would yet be of great advantage to thoſe that have it, and what they ought to be very thankful to the Divine Goodneſs for. But I cannot think this is all the benefit we have by Divine Revelation, and that it gives us no knowledge or information with reſpect to any part of the duty required of us, but what the light of Natural Reaſon was able clearly and certainly to diſcover, and actually did diſcover, by its own unaſſiſted ſtrength. I join with the learned Doctor in the declaration he makes, that " there can be no ſurer " way of knowing what Reaſon can diſcover, and what not, than " by examining what proficiency was actually made in moral

(*p*) Dr. Sykes's Principles and Connection of Natural and Revealed Religion, p. 108, 109.

(*q*) Ibid. p. 110.

" knowledge,

" knowledge, by thoſe who lived where Revelation was un-
" known (*r*)." Let us therefore put it to this iſſue. But then it is to be obſerved, that there is one capital miſtake, which runs through all that this very ingenious and able writer, and others of the ſame ſentiments, have advanced on this head; and that is, that they take it for granted, that whatever the Heathen moraliſts and philoſophers have taught with regard to religion, or any part of duty, they diſcovered it merely by an effort of their own reaſon, without any light derived from Revelation at all. But this is impoſſible for them to prove. There is juſt ground to believe, as has been ſhewn, that the knowledge of the one true God, the Creator of the World, and of the main principles of religion and morality, were originally communicated by Divine Revelation to the firſt parents and anceſtors of the human race, and from them tranſmitted to their deſcendants; ſome traces of which ſtill continued, and were never utterly extinguiſhed in the Heathen world. Beſides which, the chief articles of moral duty were delivered and promulgated with a moſt amazing ſolemnity, by an expreſs Divine Revelation, to a whole nation, and committed to writing, before any of thoſe philoſophers, who are ſo much admired, publiſhed their moral diſcourſes. And it is well known, that many of thoſe great men travelled into countries bordering upon Judea, in order to gain knowledge, eſpecially in matters of religion and morality. And thoſe of that nation were pretty early ſpread abroad in ſeveral parts of the Pagan world. This learned

(*r*) Dr. Sykes's Principles and Connection of Natural and Revealed Religion, p. 109.

author

author himſelf acknowledges, that the wiſeſt men in Greece travelled into Egypt, that they might come at the knowledge of the unity of God; ſo that they did not attain merely by the force of their own unaſſiſted reaſon to the knowledge of that which he himſelf affirms to be the fundamental principle of all morality (*s*). To which it may be added, that ſome of the moſt eminent of thoſe philoſophers were ſenſible of the great need they ſtood in of a Divine Aſſiſtance, to lead them into the right knowledge of religion and their duty, and frequently take notice of antient and venerable traditions, to which they refer, and which they ſuppoſe to have been of divine original.

But if we ſhould grant that they had all which they taught in relation to religion and morals purely by their own reaſon, it is far from being true that there is not any one evangelical precept, or point of moral duty, taught and enforced in the Goſpel, that was not taught by the Heathen philoſophers. I ſhall at preſent only inſtance in one, which is of very great importance: it is that precept mentioned by our Saviour, " Thou ſhalt worſhip the Lord " thy God, and him only ſhalt thou ſerve." Matt. iv. 10. The philoſophers were univerſally wrong, both in conforming themſelves, and urging it as a duty upon the people to conform in their religious worſhip, to the rites and laws of their ſeveral countries, by which polytheiſm was eſtabliſhed, and the public worſhip was

(*s*) Dr. Sykes's Principles and Connection of Natural and Revealed Religion, p. 383.

directed to a multiplicity of deities. This was a grand defect, and ſpread confuſion and error through that part of duty which relates to the exerciſes of piety towards God, which ſome of the philoſophers themſelves acknowledged to be an eſſential branch of morality. I ſhall have occaſion afterwards, in the courſe of this work, to take notice of ſome other evangelical precepts which were not taught by the philoſophers.

But, not to inſiſt upon this at preſent, I would obſerve, that it cannot reaſonably be pretended, that a complete ſyſtem of morality, in its juſt extent, and without any material defect, is to be found in the writings of any one philoſopher, or ſect of philoſophers. The utmoſt that can be alledged with any ſhew of reaſon is, that there is no one moral duty preſcribed in the Goſpel, but which may poſſibly be found in the writings of ſome or other of the antient Pagan philoſophers. But if this were ſo, what uſe or force could this be ſuppoſed to have with reſpect to the people, or the bulk of mankind? muſt they be put to ſeek out their duty amidſt the ſcattered volumes of philoſophers and moraliſts, and to pick out, every man for himſelf, that which ſeemeth to him to be the beſt in each of them? Or, if any one philoſopher ſhould undertake to do it for the people, and ſelect out of them all a ſyſtem of morals, which in his opinion would be a complete rule of duty, upon what foundation could this paſs for a code of laws, obligatory on all mankind, or even on any particular nation or perſon, unleſs enforced by ſome ſuperior authority? Mr. Locke has expreſſed this ſo happily, that I cannot give my ſenſe of it better

better than in his words. Speaking of moral precepts, he ſaith, " Suppoſing they may be picked up here and there, ſome from " Solon and Bias in Greece, others from Tully in Italy, and to " complete the whole, let Confucius as far as China be con- " ſulted, and Anacharſis the Scythian contribute his ſhare; " what will all this do to give the world a complete morality, " that may be to mankind the unqueſtionable rule of life and " manners? Did the ſaying of Ariſtippus or Confucius give it " an authority? Was Zeno a lawgiver to mankind? If not, " what he or any other philoſopher delivered was but a ſaying " of his. Mankind might hearken to it or reject it as they " pleaſed, or as ſuited their intereſts, paſſions, inclinations, or " humours, if they were under no obligation (*t*)."

Let us ſuppoſe that the leſſons and inſtructions given by philoſophers and moraliſts, with reſpect to any particular duty, appear to be fit and reaſonable, this is not alone ſufficient to give them a binding force. A thing may appear to be agreeable to reaſon, and yet there may be inducements and motives on the other ſide, which may keep the mind ſuſpended, except there be an higher authority to turn the ſcale. The obſervation which Grotius applies to a particular caſe, holds of many others. That " that " which has leſs utility is not merely for that reaſon unlawful: " and it may happen that a more conſiderable utility may be

(*t*) Locke's Reaſonableneſs of Chriſtianity. See his Works, vol. II. p. 533. edit. 3d.

" oppoſed

" oppoſed to that which we have in view, whatever we ſuppoſe it " to be.—Neque enim quod minus utile eſt ſtatim illicitum eſt, " adde quod accidere poteſt; ut huic qualicunque utilitati alia " major utilitas repugnet (*u*)." In matters of practice, a thing may ſeem to be reaſonable, and yet cannot be proved to be certainly and neceſſarily obligatory. So much may be ſaid in oppoſition to it, as may very much weaken the force of what is offered to recommend it: and a prevailing appetite, or worldly intereſt, has often a great influence on the mind, and hinders it from paſſing an impartial judgment. But a Divine Revelation, clearly aſcertaining and determining our duty in thoſe inſtances, in plain and expreſs terms, and enforcing it by a Divine Authority, and by ſanctions of rewards and puniſhments, would decide the point, and leave no room to doubt of the obligation. A noble author, ſpeaking of the philoſophers, ſaith, that " ſome few particular " men may diſcover, explain, and preſs upon others the moral " obligations incumbent upon all, and our moral ſtate be little " improved (*x*)." And therefore he lays the principal ſtreſs upon the inſtitutions of civil laws and governments, and the various puniſhments which human juſtice inflicts to enforce thoſe laws. But how little fitted thoſe inſtitutions are to enforce morality and virtue, taken in its true notion and proper extent, has been already ſhewn. The greateſt men of antiquity ſeem to have been ſenſible, that neither bare reaſon and philoſophy, nor a mere human

(*u*) Grotius de Jure Belli et Pacis, lib. ii. cap. 5. ſect. 12.

(*x*) Bolingbroke's Works, Vol. V. p. 480.

authority, is ſufficient to bind laws upon mankind. Accordingly, the laſt mentioned author, who was eminent for his political knowledge, has obſerved, that " the moſt celebrated philoſophers " and lawgivers did enforce their doctrines and laws by a Divine " Authority, and call in an higher principle to the aſſiſtance of " philoſophy and bare reaſon. He inſtances in Zoroaſter, Ho- " ſtanes, the Magi, Minos, Numa, Pythagoras, and all thoſe " who framed and formed religions and commonwealths, who " made theſe pretenſions, and paſſed for men divinely inſpired and " commiſſioned (*y*)." And theſe pretenſions, though not vouched by ſufficient credentials, gave their laws and inſtitutions a force with the people, which otherwiſe they would not have had. But as the ſeveral ſects of philoſophers in ſucceeding ages, among the Greeks and Romans, only ſtood upon the foot of their own reaſoning, and could not pretend to a Divine Authority, this very much weakened the effect of their moral leſſons and precepts. And, indeed, the beſt and wiſeſt amongſt them acknowledged on ſeveral occaſions the need they ſtood in of a Divine Revelation and Inſtruction. That the philoſophers in general laid no great weight with the people, appears from what is obſerved in the firſt volume of this work, chap 10. To which it may be added, that Cicero, after having given the higheſt encomiums on philoſophy, eſpecially as the beſt guide in morals, adds, that " it is " ſo far from being eſteemed and praiſed, according to what it " merits of human life, that it is by the moſt of mankind neg-

(*y*) Bolingbroke's Works, Vol. V. p. 227.

" lected,

" lected, and by many even reproached.—Philoſophia quidem " tantum abeſt, ut proinde ac de hominum eſt vitâ merita, " laudetur, ut a pleriſque neglecta, à multis etiam vitupere- " tur (z)."

(z) Tuſcul. Diſput. lib. v. cap. 2. p. 344. edit. Davis.

CHAP. VI.

Many of the philoſophers were fundamentally wrong in the firſt principles of morals. They denied that there are any moral differences of things founded in nature and reaſon, and reſolved them wholly into human laws and cuſtoms. Obſervations on thoſe philoſophers who made man's chief good conſiſt in pleaſure, and propoſed this as the higheſt end of morals, without any regard to a Divine Law. The moral ſyſtem of Epicurus conſidered. His high pretences to virtue examined. The inconſiſtency of his principles ſhewn, and that, if purſued to their genuine conſequences, they are really deſtructive of all virtue and good morals.

MORAL philoſophy, properly ſpeaking, had its beginning among the Greeks with Socrates. Cicero ſays, " he was " the firſt that called down philoſophy from heaven, and intro- " duced it into cities and private houſes, and obliged it to make " life and manners the ſubject of its enquiries.—Primus philo- " ſophiam devocavit à cœlo, et in urbibus collocavit, et in do- " mus etiam introduxit, et coegit de vitâ et moribus, rebuſque " bonis et malis quærere (*a*)." Not that he was the firſt philoſopher that ever treated of morals, but, as the ſame great man elſewhere obſerves, Socrates was the firſt that, quitting abſtruſe diſquiſitions into natural things, and curious ſpeculations about the heavenly bodies (which had principally employed all the philoſophers

(*a*) Tuſcul. Diſput. lib. v. cap. 4.

before

before him) as being things too remote from our knowledge, or, if known, of little uſe to direct men's conduct, brought philoſophy into common life, and made virtues and vices, things good and evil, the only object of his philoſophy (*b*). From his time the ſcience of morals was cultivated. All the different ſects of philoſophers treated of morality, but they went upon very different principles.

Some of the philoſophers were wrong in the very fundamental principles of morals. And ſince the foundation was wrong, they could not build upon it a proper ſyſtem, nor be depended upon for leading mankind into right notions of their duty. Such were thoſe who maintained, that nothing is juſt or unjuſt by nature, but only by law and cuſtom. This was the opinion, as Laertius informs us, of Theodorus, Archelaus, Ariſtippus, and others. This way alſo went Pyrrho, and all the ſceptics, who denied that any thing is in itſelf, and by its own nature, honeſt or diſhoneſt, baſe or honourable, but only by virtue of the laws and cuſtoms which have obtained among men: for which they are deſervedly expoſed by Epictetus (*c*). Plato repreſents it as a faſhionable opinion, which very much prevailed in his time, and was maintained and propagated by many that were eſteemed wiſe men and philoſophers, " That the things which are accounted

(*b*) Academic. lib. i. cap. 4.

(*c*) Epictet. Diſſert. lib. ii. cap. 20. ſect. 6. Our modern ſceptics, as well as the antient, ſet themſelves to ſhew the uncertainty of morals. Mr. Bayle has many paſſages which look that way. And this particularly is what the author of a late remarkable tract, intituled, Le Pyrrhoniſme du Sage, has attempted to ſhew.

" juſt,

" juſt, are not ſo by nature: for that men are always differing " about them, and making new conſtitutions: and as often as " they are thus conſtituted, they obtain authority, being made " juſt by art and by the laws, not by any natural force or " virtue (*d*)."

Thus did many of the philoſophers reſolve all moral obligations into merely human laws and conſtitutions, making them the only meaſure of right and wrong, of good and evil. So that if the people had a mind to be inſtructed, what they ſhould do or forbear, they ſent them to the laws of their ſeveral countries, and allowed them to do whatſoever was not forbidden by thoſe laws. And in this thoſe philoſophers agreed with the politicians. When Alcibiades aſked Pericles, What is law? he anſwered, That all thoſe are laws which are preſcribed with the conſent and approbation of the people, declaring what things ought to be done, or ought not to be done: and intimated, that whatſoever things are appointed by legal authority, are to be regarded as good, and not evil (*e*). And indeed Socrates himſelf, and the moſt celebrated philoſophers and moraliſts, though they acknowledged a real foundation in nature for the moral differences of things, yet everywhere inculcate it as a neceſſary ingredient in a good man's character, to obey without reſerve the laws of his country. But what uncertain rules of morality the civil laws and conſtitutions are, and that they might often lead men into vicious and im-

(*d*) Plato de Leg. lib. x. Oper. p. 666. C. edit. Lugd.

(*e*) Xenoph. Memor. Socr. lib. i. cap. 2. ſect. 42.

moral

moral practices, ſufficiently appears from what hath been already obſerved.

Some of the philoſophers, as Laertius tells us of Theodorus, declared without diſguiſe, that " a wiſe man might, upon a fit " occaſion, commit theft, adultery, and ſacrilege, for that none " of theſe things are baſe in their own nature, if that opinion " concerning them be taken away which was agreed upon for " the ſake of reſtraining fools." Τὸν σπουδαῖον κλέψειν τε καὶ μοιχεύσειν, καὶ ἱεροσυλήσειν, ἐν καιρῷ, μηδὲν γὰρ εἶναι τούτων αἰσχρὸν φύσει, τῆς ἐπ' αὐτοῖς δόξης αἰρομένης, ἣ σύγκειται ἕνεκα τῆς τῶν ἀφρόνων συνοχῆς (*f*). Ariſtippus, who alſo held that " nothing is by nature " juſt, or honourable, or baſe, but by law and cuſtom," yet is pleaſed to declare, that a prudent man will not do an abſurd thing, σπουδὲν ἄτοπον, any thing out of the common uſage, becauſe of the dangers it might bring upon him, and the cenſures it might expoſe him to (*g*). And how weak a tie this would be to a man that had nothing elſe to reſtrain him, I need not take pains to ſhew. It is evident that, upon this ſcheme of things, there can be no ſuch thing as conſcience, or a fixed notion of virtue. It opens a wide door to licentiouſneſs, and to the perpetrating all manner of vice and wickedneſs without ſcruple, if they can but eſcape public notice, and the puniſhment of human judicatories. What fine inſtructors in morals were thoſe philoſophers who taught ſuch maxims!

(*f*) Diog. Laert. lib. ii. ſegm. 99.

(*g*) Ibid. ſegm. 98.

Among

Among thoſe antient philoſophers who were wrong in the fundamental principles of morals, they may be juſtly reckoned who laid this down as the foundation of their moral ſyſtem, that a man's chief good conſiſts in ſenſual pleaſure, and that this is the ſupreme end he is to propoſe to himſelf, to which every thing elſe ſhould be ſubordinate. There is a remarkable paſſage of Cicero in his firſt book of laws relating to this ſubject, in which he repreſents pleaſure as an enemy within us, " which being intimately " complicated with all the ſenſes, lays all kinds of ſnares for our " ſouls: that it hath a ſemblance of good or happineſs, but is " really the author of evils: and that being corrupted by its " blandiſhments, we do not ſufficiently diſcern the things which are " in their own nature good, becauſe they want that ſweetneſs and " tickling or itching kind of ſenſation it affords.—Animis omnes " tenduntur inſidiæ ab eâ, quæ penitus omni ſenſu implicata in- " ſidet imitatrix boni voluptas, malorum autem autor omnium, " cujus blanditiis corrupti quæ naturâ bona ſunt, quia dulcedine " hâc et ſcabie carent, non cernimus ſatis (*h*)." And again, ſpeaking of thoſe who ſtifly maintained that pleaſure is the greateſt good, he ſays, that " this ſeems to him to be rather the language " of beaſts than of men:—quæ quidem mihi vox pecudum videtur " eſſe non hominum (*i*)." Ariſtippus, and his followers of the Cyrenaic

(*h*) De Leg. lib. i. cap. 17.

(*i*) De Parad. cap. 1. Some of our modern admirers of reaſon differ very much from Cicero in their ſentiments on this ſubject. The author of Les ſix Diſcours ſur l'Homme, ſaid to be written by the celebrated M. de Voltaire, who ſets up as a zealous advocate for natural religion, ſays, that " nature, attentive to fulfil our " deſires, calleth us to God by the voice of pleaſures."

Cyrenaic ſect taught this doctrine in the groſſeſt ſenſe, and without diſguiſe. They held corporeal pleaſure to be our ultimate end;

" La nature attentive a remplir nos deſirs,
" Nous rapelle au Dieu par le voix des plaiſirs."

At this rate, men will be apt to regard all their inclinations and appetites, as the ſignifications of the will of God concerning the duties he requireth of them. This is alſo the prevailing maxim of the author of the famous book De l'Eſprit, who obſerves, that " ſince pleaſure is the only object which men ſeek after, all that is " neceſſary to inſpire them with a love of virtue is to imitate nature. Pleaſure " pronounces what nature wills, and grief or pain ſhews what nature forbids, " and man readily obeys it. The love of pleaſure, againſt which men, more re- " ſpectable for their probity than their judgment, have declaimed, is a rein, by " which the paſſions of particular perſons may be always directed to the general " good.—Si le plaiſir eſt l'unique objet de la recherche des hommes, pour lui " inſpirer l'amour de la vertu, il ne faut qu' imiter la nature: le plaiſir en annonce " les volontés, le douleur les defenſes; et l'homme lui obeit avec docilité. " L'amour du plaiſir, contre lequel ſe font elevés des gens d'une probité plus re- " ſpectable qu' eclaircée, eſt un frein, avec lequel on peut toujours diriger au bien " general les paſſions des particuliers." De l'Eſprit, diſc. 3. chap. 16. tome II. p. 67. edit. Amſt. And what kind of pleaſure he intends, clearly appears from the latter end of the 13th chapter of his 3d diſcourſe, where he ſays, that " there " are only two kinds of pleaſures: the pleaſures of the ſenſes, and the means of " obtaining them; which may be ranked among pleaſures; becauſe the hope of " pleaſure is the beginning of pleaſure." And this is agreeable to the general ſcheme of his book, which goes upon this principle, that phyſical ſenſibility is the ſource of all our ideas, and that man is not capable of any other motive to determine him than the pleaſures of the ſenſes: and theſe are all expreſly reduced by him to love, the love of women. And he makes the perfection of legiſlation to conſiſt in exciting men to the nobleſt actions, by fomenting and gratifying thoſe ſenſual paſſions. He ſays, " If the pleaſure of love be the moſt lively and vigorous " of all human pleaſures, what a fruitful ſource of courage is contained in this " pleaſure? and what ardor for virtue may not the love of women inſpire?" Ibid. tome II. diſc. 3. chap. 15. p. 51. And accordingly he pleads for gallantry in a nation where luxury is neceſſary (and it is well known, that under the name of gallantry, eſpecially in that nation to which this gentleman belongs, is comprehended an unlawful commerce with married women). He thinks, " that it is not " agreeable to policy to regard it as a vice in a moral ſenſe: or, if they will call it a

end; that pleaſure which actually moves and ſtrikes the ſenſes: and they roundly affirmed, that the pleaſures of the body are much better than thoſe of the ſoul, and its pains and griefs much

" vice, it muſt be acknowledged that there are vices which are uſeful in certain " ages and countries." And to ſay that thoſe vices are uſeful in certain countries, is, according to his ſcheme, to ſay, that in thoſe countries they are virtues: for he holds, that every action ought to be called virtuous, which is advantageous to the public. " C'eſt une inconſequence politique que de regarder la galanterie, " comme un vici moral: et ſi l'on veut lui conſerver le nom de vice, il faut con- " venir, qu'il en eſt d'utiles dans certains ſiecles, et certains pays." Ibid. tome I. diſc. 2. chap. 15. p. 176. et ſeq.

The author of Le Diſcours ſur la Vie Heureuſe, printed at the end of Penſees Philoſophiques, carries it ſtill farther. The deſign of that whole treatiſe is to ſhew, that happineſs conſiſts only in ſenſual pleaſure, and in the gratification of the fleſhly appetite, and that wiſdom conſiſts in purſuing it. From this principle, that the actual pleaſurable ſenſation of the body is the only true happineſs, he draws concluſions worthy of ſuch a principle: that " we ought to take care of the body " before the ſoul; to cultivate the mind only with a view to procure more ad- " vantages for the body; to deny ourſelves nothing that can give us pleaſure; to " uſe nature (by which he means the bodily appetites) as a guide to reaſon." It is no wonder then that he aſſerts, that " the law of nature directs us to give up " truth to the laws, rather than our bodies; and that it is natural to treat virtue " in the ſame way as truth.—Des lors il faut ſonger au corps, avant que de ſonger " a l'ame; ne cultiver ſon ame, que pour procurer plus de commodités a ſon " corps; ne point ſe priver de ce que fait plaiſir; donner a la raiſon la nature " pour guide. La loi de la nature dicte de leur [i. e. aux loix des hommes] " livrer plutot la verité que nos corps; il eſt naturel de traiter la vertu comme de " la verite *." Such is the morality taught by ſome of our pretended maſters of reaſon in the preſent age, who are too wiſe to be guided by Revelation, and expreſs a contempt for thoſe, as weak and ſuperſtitious perſons, who are for governing themſelves by its ſacred rules. It can hardly be thought too ſevere a cenſure to ſay, that the principal reaſon of their endeavouring to diſcard the Goſpel is, that they may be freed from the reſtraints it lays upon their ſenſual and depraved paſſions, and that they may be left looſe in matters of morality, to follow their own inclinations, and to do whatſoever their appetites would prompt them to.

* Diſcours ſur la Vie Heureuſe, à Potſdam 1748. p. 34. See L'Abbé Gauchet Lettres Critiques.

worſe.

worſe. See Laert. lib. ii. ſegm. 87 et 90. Epicurus, who held the ſame principle, that pleaſure is the chief good and higheſt end of man, endeavoured to explain it ſo as to ſhun the odious conſequences which are charged upon it. His morality was highly extolled by ſome of the antients, and has had very learned apologiſts among the moderns, ſome of whom have not ſcrupled to prefer it to that of any other of the Heathen philoſophers. It is neceſſary, therefore, in conſidering the ſyſtems of the Pagan moraliſts, to take particular notice of that of Epicurus, that we may ſee whether it deſerves the encomiums which have been ſo liberally beſtowed upon it. And I cannot help thinking, that, whatever plauſible appearances it may put on, yet if we take the whole of his ſcheme together, and impartially conſider it in its proper connection and natural conſequences, we ſhall find it deſtructive of true virtue.

It is evident that there is one eſſential defect which runs through his whole ſyſtem of morality, and that is, that it had no regard to the Deity, or to a Divine Authority or Law: the gods he owns (for he does not ſpeak of one Supreme God) were ſuch as lived at eaſe, and without care, in the extra-mundane ſpaces, and exerciſed no inſpection over mankind, nor ever concerned themſelves about their actions and affairs. There was therefore no room upon his ſcheme for the exerciſe of piety towards God, a ſubmiſſion to his authority, and reſignation to his will, or for a dependance upon Providence, and a religious regard to the Divine favour and approbation. It is true, that Epicurus writ books

about piety and ſanctity (*k*), for which he is deſervedly ridiculed by Cotta in Cicero (*l*). And Epictetus obſerves concerning the Epicureans, that " they got themſelves made prieſts and prophets " of gods, which, according to them, had no exiſtence, and " conſulted the Pythian prieſteſs, only to hear what in their " opinion were falſhoods, and interpreted thoſe oracles to others." This he calls a monſtrous impudence and impoſture (*m*).

As to that part of morality which relates to the duties we owe to mankind, in this alſo the ſcheme of Epicurus, at leaſt if purſued to its genuine conſequences, was greatly defective. He taught, that a man is to do every thing for his own ſake: that he is to make his own happineſs his chief end, and to do all in his power to ſecure and preſerve it. And he makes happineſs to conſiſt in the mind's being freed from trouble, and the body from pain. Accordingly, it is one of his maxims, that " buſineſs and " cares do not conſiſt with happineſs."—Οὐ συμφωνεῖσι πραγματεῖαι καὶ φροντίδες μακαριότητι (*n*). According to this ſcheme of principle, no man ought to do any thing that would expoſe him

(*k*) Laert. lib. x. ſeg. 27.

(*l*) De Nat. Deor. lib. i. cap. 41. It is a little ſurprizing, that ſo great a man as Gaſſendus, among the many fine things he ſays of Epicurus, has thought fit to mention his diſintereſted piety, and filial affection towards the Divine Nature. What he offers on this head is extremely weak, and is a remarkable inſtance of what may be often obſerved, that when learned men have undertaken an hypotheſis, they ſeem reſolved at any rate to defend it. See Gaſſend. de Vitâ et Moribus Epicuri, lib. iv. cap. 3.

(*m*) Epictet. Differt. book ii. chap. 20. ſect. 2, 3, 4.

(*n*) Laert. lib. x. ſegm. 77.

to

to trouble and pain, or give him diſturbance: and therefore he ought not to run any hazard, or expoſe himſelf to ſufferings, for the public good, for his friend, or for his country. I know that he ſometimes expreſſes himſelf in a different ſtrain. But this is the natural conſequence of his avowed principles. And therefore Epictetus charges him with having mutilated all the offices of a maſter of a family, of a citizen, and of a friend. He obſerves, that, from a deſire of ſhunning all uneaſineſs, Epicurus diſſuaded a wiſe man from marrying and breeding up children; becauſe he was ſenſible, that if once a child is born, it is no longer in a parent's power not to be ſollicitous about it. For the ſame reaſon he ſays, that a wiſe man will not engage himſelf in public buſineſs, or meddle with the affairs of the commonwealth (*o*). His own practice was ſuitable to it, for he loved an eaſy and retired life. But, as Epictetus there obſerves, many of the Epicureans, though they talked at this rate, both married and engaged in public affairs.

Let us now come to that part of Epicurus's morals, which has the faireſt appearance, and which has prejudiced many perſons in his favour. He has given excellent leſſons of moderation, temperance, patience, meekneſs, and forgiveneſs of injuries, and even continence with regard to venereal pleaſures. He repreſents the inconveniences of indulging them in ſtrong terms. He declares, "that when he makes pleaſure the chief end, he does not mean

(*o*) Diſſert. book ii. chap. 20. ſect. 3. and ibid. book i. chap. 3. and book iii. chap. 7. See alſo Laert. lib. x. ſegm. 119.

"tha

" the pleaſures of the luxurious, as ignorant perſons, and thoſe " that do not rightly underſtand his ſentiments, ſuppoſe: but " principally the freedom of the body from pain, and of the mind " from anguiſh and perturbation. For, ſays he, it is not drink- " ing or revelling, nor the enjoyment of boys and women, nor the " feaſting upon fiſh, and the other things that a ſumptuous table " furniſheth, which procure a pleaſant life, but ſober reaſon, " which ſearcheth into the cauſes of things, why and how far " they are to be choſen or avoided, and teacheth us to caſt out " thoſe opinions which fill the ſoul with perturbation and tu- " mult." He adds, that " the principle of all theſe things is " prudence (*p*)." What the opinions are that he thinks inconſiſtent with happineſs or tranquillity, will be ſeen afterwards; at preſent I ſhall only obſerve, that he here openly declares, that the pleaſures he intends are not thoſe of luxury and exceſs, as many are apt to ſuppoſe, but ſuch as are under the conduct of reaſon and prudence. He frequently ſpeaks in high terms of virtue, and the happineſs which attends it. It was one of his maxims, or κυρίαι δόξαι, that " it is not poſſible for any man to live " pleaſantly, unleſs he lives prudently, and honeſtly, and juſtly: " nor can he live prudently, honeſtly, and juſtly, without living " pleaſantly (*q*):" and that " virtue is inſeparable from a happy " life (*r*)." He often recommends frugality and temperance, and the being content with a little: and ſays, that a ſimple meal

(*p*) Laert. lib. x. ſegm. 18.

(*q*) Ibid. ſegm. 132 et 140.

(*r*) Ibid. ſegm. 131, 132.

is

is equal to a ſumptuous feaſt: and that coarſe bread and water yields the greateſt pleaſure to a man that takes it when he needeth it. And it is ſaid by Cicero, Seneca, and other antient authors, that Epicurus himſelf lived a ſober and temperate life, and took up with ſlender fare. So that thoſe who allow themſelves in unbounded gratifications of their appetites, and make pleaſure to conſiſt in licentiouſneſs and exceſs, carry it much farther than Epicurus did, and cannot juſtly avail themſelves of his authority.

But notwithſtanding all that can be alledged in favour of Epicurus, his ſcheme of morality appears to be wrong at the very foundation. The virtue he preſcribes is reſolved ultimately into a man's own private convenience and advantage, without regard to the excellence of it in its own nature, or to its being commanded or required of us by God: for, as has been already hinted in his ſyſtem of morals, there is no reſpect had to a divine law. The friendſhip of Epicurus, and his followers, has been highly extolled, and propoſed as a model; and yet, according to him, friendſhip, as well as juſtice and fidelity, is to be obſerved and exerciſed, only becauſe of the profit or pleaſure which it procures us. So it is that Torquatus the Epicurean argues, in Cicero's firſt book De Finibus Bonorum et Malorum. He ſays the ſame thing of temperance: and blames luxury and effeminacy, becauſe they who indulge it, being allured by preſent pleaſures, expoſe themſelves to greater pains, diſeaſes, &c. afterwards. It is one of Epicurus's maxims, as it was alſo of the Cyrenaics, that no pleaſure is in itſelf an evil, but the things that are the cauſes of ſome pleaſure, bring on many more troubles than

than pleaſures (*s*); where he ſeems to blame no pleaſures as evil, except on account of the greater troubles to which they expoſe the man that indulges them. Agreeably to this maxim, he ſays, "A wiſe man will not have carnal commerce with any woman "which the law forbids him to touch (*t*)." So that he makes the laws, i. e. the laws of the country where a man lives, and a man's own convenience, the only meaſure of continence: and in effect allows a man to indulge himſelf in any pleaſures or gratifications, which are not prohibited by the laws, provided he does not run into ſuch exceſſes in thoſe pleaſures as may hurt himſelf. Epicurus, therefore, if he had lived in Perſia, would have had no objection to the inceſtuous mixtures there allowed by the laws. At Athens, where he dwelt, adultery was forbidden under ſevere penalties, he would not therefore, according to his principles, touch married women. But Leontium, a philoſophical Athenian courtezan, was miſtreſs both to him and his intimate friend and companion Metrodorus (*u*). Other miſtreſſes of his are mentioned (*x*). Some authors, indeed, contend, that theſe ſtories were forged by his enemies, and extol his continence and chaſtity: but I do not ſee that Epicurus, upon his principles, could have any ſcruple about thoſe practices as vicious, though he might abſtain from them on other conſiderations. It may not be improper here to take notice of a remarkable paſſage in his book

(*s*) Laert. lib. x. ſegm. 141.

(*t*) Ibid. ſegm. 118.

(*u*) Ibid. ſegm. 6 et 23.

(*x*) See Menagius's Obſervations on Laertius, p. 448. edit. Weſt.

Περὶ Τέλους, de fine, in which he ſays, that he "cannot underſtand "what good there is, if we take away the pleaſures which are "perceived by the taſte, thoſe which ariſe from venereal gratifica- "tions, thoſe that come in by the ears, and the agreeable emo- "tions which are excited by the ſight of beautiful forms." This paſſage is mentioned by his great admirer Laertius, who repreſents it as urged againſt Epicurus by thoſe that endeavoured to calumniate him (*y*). But he does not deny, that it was really to be found in that book, which was accounted one of the beſt of his treatiſes. It is alſo produced more fully by Athenæus (*z*), and by Cicero, who often refers to it. He gives a fine tranſlation of it in the third book of his Tuſculan Diſputations, cap. 18. p. 224. where Dr. Davis's note upon it may be conſulted. And he elſewhere gives the ſenſe of it thus: "Nec intelligere quidem ſe poſſe "ubi ſit, et quid ſit ullum bonum, præter illud quod ſenſibus cor- "poreis, cibis, potioneque, formarum aſpectu, aurium delectatione, "et obſcænâ voluptate percipitur (*a*)." The ſame great author charges Epicurus with maintaining, that all the pleaſures and dolours of the mind belong to the pleaſures and pains of the body; and that there is no joy of the mind, but what originally ariſes from the body (*b*). Though at the ſame time he ſaid, that the pleaſures and pains of the mind are more and greater than thoſe

(*y*) Laert. lib. x. ſegm. 6.

(*z*) Deipnoſ. lib. vii. p. 208. et lib. xii. p. 546.

(*a*) De Finib. lib. ii. cap. 3. And ſee Davis's note.

(*b*) De Finib. lib. i. cap. 17.

of the body; in which he differed from Ariſtippus and the Cyrenaics.

To let us farther into Epicurus's ſcheme of morals, it may be obſerved, that though he forbids injuſtice and other great crimes, it ſeems to be not upon the moſt noble and generous principles, but for fear of human puniſhments. Seneca, who, though a Stoic, often ſpeaks favourably of Epicurus, and mentions many of his moral ſentences with approbation, repreſents his ſenſe thus: "Nihil juſtum eſſe naturâ, et crimina vitanda eſſe quia metus "vitari non poſſit (*c*)."—That "nothing is juſt by nature, and "that crimes are to be avoided, becauſe fear cannot be avoided:" that is, if a man commits crimes, he cannot avoid the fear of detection or puniſhment. And that in this he juſtly repreſents Epicurus's ſentiments, may be fairly concluded from the paſſages cited from Epicurus himſelf by Laertius, who had a high eſteem for him. In the account he gives of his Κυρίαι δόξαι, or principal maxims, one is, That "juſtice would be nothing of itſelf, "but for the conventions or agreements men have entered into "in many places, not to hurt others, or be hurt by them." And again, that "injuſtice is not an evil in itſelf, ἡ ἀδικία ὑ καθ' "ἑαυτὴν κακόν, but becauſe of the fear which attends it, ariſing "from a ſuſpicion that it cannot be hid from thoſe who are con-"ſtituted the puniſhers of ſuch things." He adds, "Let not "that man, who ſecretly does any thing contrary to the conven-"tions men have eſtabliſhed among themſelves, not to hurt

(*c*) Sen. epiſt. 97.

"others,

" others, or be hurt by them, believe that he ſhall be able to " keep it ſecret, though he has eſcaped detection a thouſand " times, even to this preſent: for even to the end of his life, it is " ſtill uncertain whether he ſhall be able to conceal it (*d*)." Here it is plain, that the reaſon he gives why a man ſhould abſtain from doing an unjuſt thing, is not becauſe it is in itſelf evil, but becauſe of the puniſhment it may expoſe him to, not from God (for all fear of this kind he rejects as vain and ſuperſtitious) but from men: either from public juſtice, or private reſentment and revenge, which no man can be ſure he ſhall always eſcape. Accordingly, it was an advice of his, as Seneca informs us, " Do " every thing as if ſome perſon ſaw thee do it;" i. e. as if ſome man ſaw thee. For he denied that the gods obſerve or concern themſelves with men, or any of their actions: " Sic fac, inquit, " tanquàm ſpectet aliquis (*e*)." Upon theſe principles there is no villainy which a man may not commit, if he can but perſuade himſelf (which bad men are often apt to do) that he ſhall not be detected or puniſhed for it by men: or, as Cicero expreſſes it, " ut " hominum conſcientiâ remotâ, nihil tam turpe ſit, quod volup- " tatis cauſâ non videatur eſſe facturus (*f*)." Epictetus ſets theſe principles of Epicurus, and their pernicious conſequences, in a ſtrong light (*g*).

(*d*) Laert. lib. x. ſegm. 150, 151.

(*e*) Sen. epiſt. 25.

(*f*) De Finib. lib. ii. cap. 9. p. 108. edit. Davis.

(*g*) Diſſert. book ii. chap. 20. and book iii. chap. 7. ſect. 1.

That which Epicurus valued himſelf principally upon, and for which he was mightily extolled and admired by his followers, was, that he propoſed to inſtruct men in the nature of true happineſs, and to direct them to the only proper means of attaining to it. Happineſs he made to conſiſt, as hath been already hinted, not merely as Ariſtippus and the Cyrenaics did, in the actual motions of ſenſual pleaſures and gratifications, though theſe alſo he admitted, but chiefly in indolence of body and tranquillity of mind; i. e. that the body be freed from pain, and the mind from trouble, both in the moſt perfect degree, and ſo as to admit of no increaſe. This happineſs he ſuppoſed to be perfectly attainable in this life; and, indeed, this he muſt ſuppoſe, or that it is not attainable at all, ſince he allowed no other life but this. The Cyrenaics, in this matter, talked more reaſonably than Epicurus; for, as they looked upon pleaſure to be the chiefeſt good, and could not deny that men are now ſubject to many pains and troubles, ſome of them aſſerted that it is extremely difficult, and others that it is impoſſible to attain to a life of perfect happineſs (*h*). Nor would they allow with Epicurus, that a freedom from pain can be accounted pleaſure, and even the higheſt pleaſure (*i*). And in this alſo they talked more reaſonably than he.

As to the means for attaining to what Epicurus accounted perfect happineſs, ſome of thoſe he preſcribed were certainly very

(*h*) Laert. lib. ii. ſegm. 90 et 94.

(*i*) Ibid. ſegm. 89. See alſo Cicero de Finib. lib. i. cap. 11. where Torquatus the Epicurean ſays, "Omni dolore carere, non modo voluptatem eſſe, ſed ſummam "voluptatem." Cicero expoſes this very well, de Finib. lib. ii. cap. 5. p. 89. et cap. 7. p. 93. edit. Davis.

proper.

proper. He adviſed to exerciſe ſobriety, moderation, and temperance; to avoid all exceſs; not to indulge pleaſure to a degree that might bring greater evils; not to do an unjuſt thing, or any thing that might expoſe a man to puniſhment; to avoid a reſtleſs ambition; to ſhun envy and revenge, and the bitter ill-natured paſſions; and to cultivate friendſhip and benevolence. On theſe heads Epicurus ſaid excellent things, and judged very rightly that this was the beſt way a man could take, even for his own ſake, and to ſecure to himſelf an eaſy and pleaſant life. But his chief recipe for happineſs was the raiſing men above all fear of evil, and thereby placing them in a ſtate of perfect tranquillity. And there are two things which he eſpecially looked upon to be inconſiſtent with happineſs, the fear of the gods, and the fear of death: and he boaſted that he would deliver men from both theſe. His remedy againſt the firſt was to deny a Providence, or that the gods have any concern with men, or take any notice of their affairs. And it muſt be acknowledged, that nothing could be better contrived to free bad men from the terrors they might be under from an apprehenſion of divine puniſhments; but, at the ſame time, it took away the ſtrongeſt reſtraints to vice and wickedneſs, and the moſt ſolid ſupport of virtue, and that which is the principal ſource of a good man's ſatisfaction and confidence under the greateſt adverſities. As to death, he would have a man accuſtom himſelf to this thought, "That death is nothing to us." He ſays, "the knowledge of this will enable him to enjoy this "mortal life; and that there is nothing evil or grievous in life to "a man, who rightly apprehends that the privation of life has "no evil in it." And the way he takes to prove his capital maxim,

maxim, which he ſo frequently repeats, " That death is nothing " to us," is, becauſe " that which is diſſolved is void of ſenſe, " and that which is void of ſenſe is nothing to us." And again, that " whilſt we live, death is not; and when death is, we are " not (*k*)." As if ſuch quibbles and ſubtilties as theſe furniſhed a ſufficient remedy againſt the natural fear of death. But if, as he ſays, we are without ſenſe at death, this does not prove that death is nothing to us. For is it nothing to us to be deprived of life, which he himſelf repreſents as a thing to be deſired and embraced (*l*)? Since this life, according to him, is the only ſeaſon in which we can enjoy happineſs, how can it be ſaid, that death is nothing to us, which puts an utter end to all happineſs and enjoyment? Is it not natural for a man that is happy to deſire to continue to be ſo, and to be averſe to every thing that would deprive him of it? But Epicurus endeavours to provide againſt this, by obſerving, that " a right knowledge takes away the deſire " of immortality (*m*)." Accordingly, one of his Κυρίαι δόξαι is this, " That an infinite and finite time yield an equal pleaſure, " if any man will meaſure the boundaries of pleaſure by reaſon." —Ὁ ἄπειρος χρόνος ἴσην ἔχει τὴν ἡδονὴν, ἂν τις αὐτης τὰ πέρατα καταμετρήσαι τῷ λογισμῷ (*n*). Cicero expreſſes it thus; " Negat Epicurus diuturnitatem temporis ad beatè vivendum ali- " quid conferre: nec minorem voluptatem percipi in brevitate

(*k*) Laert. lib. x. ſegm. 124, 125. et 139.

(*l*) Ibid. ſegm. 125.

(*m*) Ibid. ſegm. 124.

(*n*) Ibid. ſegm. 145.

" temporis,

" temporis, quam ſi illa ſit ſempiterna (*o*)." And whether this be conſiſtent with reaſon, may be left to any man of common ſenſe to determine.

There is nothing more remarkable in Epicurus, than the glorious pretences he makes to fortitude, and a contempt of pain. He affirms, that though a wiſe man be tortured, he is ſtill happy. Ἐαν τρεθλωθῇ ὁ σόφος εἶναι αὐτὸν εὐδαίμονα (*p*). And that " if he " were ſhut up and burned in Phalaris's bull, he would cry out, " How ſweet is this! How little do I care for it!" Cicero, who mentions this, juſtly expoſes it as very abſurd and ridiculous, in a man that made pleaſure the chiefeſt good, and pain the greateſt or only evil. He obſerves, that even the Stoics themſelves, who would not allow pain to be evil, yet owned it to be " aſperum et " odioſum,—an harſh and odious thing;" and did not pretend to ſay, that it is ſweet to be tortured (*q*). But this was Epicurus's manner. He affected to ſpeak glorioufly rather than conſiſtently. Cicero remarks concerning him, that " he ſaid many excellent " things, but was not ſollicitous whether he was conſiſtent with " himſelf or not.—Multa præclarè ſæpe dicit, quàm enim ſibi " conſtanter convenienterque dicat, non laborat (*r*)." But as he there obſerves, " we are not to judge of a philoſopher by a few

(*o*) De Finib. lib. ii.

(*p*) Laert. lib. x. ſegm. 118.

(*q*) Tuſcul. Diſput. lib. ii. cap. 7. et lib. v. cap. 10. See alſo Lactant. Div. Inſtit. lib. iii. cap. 27.

(*r*) Tuſcul. Diſput. lib. v. cap. 9. See alſo De Finib. lib. ii. cap. 22. et ibid. cap. 26.

" detached

" detached independent ſentences, but by the general tenour of " his doctrine.—Non ex ſingulis vocibus philoſophi ſpectandi " ſunt, ſed ex perpetuitate atque conſtantiâ." He ſaid, among other things, that a wiſe man will ſometimes die for his friend (*s*). A generous ſentence, but not well becoming a man who reſolved friendſhip, as well as every other virtue, merely into a ſelfiſh principle, and a regard to a man's own happineſs. There is a remarkable paſſage of Epicurus, produced by Marcus Antoninus, which ſhews his magnificent way of talking, and his high pretences to virtue, as well as the great opinion he had of his own wiſdom and philoſophy. " When I was ſick (ſays he) " my converſations were not about the diſeaſes of this poor body, " nor did I ſpeak of any ſuch thing to thoſe that came to me; " but continued to diſcourſe of thoſe principles of natural philo- " ſophy I had before eſtabliſhed; and was chiefly intent on this, " how the intellectual part, though it partakes of ſuch violent " commotions of the body, might remain undiſturbed, and pre- " ſerve its own proper good; nor did I allow the phyſicians to " make a noiſe and vaunt, as if doing ſomething of great mo- " ment; but my life continued pleaſant and happy (*t*)." What could the moſt rigid Stoic have ſaid more nobly? But certainly, if Epicurus himſelf, ſupported by his vanity, made ſuch a ſhew of fortitude, the principles of his philoſophy had no tendency to inſpire a contempt of pain, or a true greatneſs of ſoul. The Stoics were more conſiſtent with themſelves. They maintained,

(*s*) Laert. lib. x. ſegm. 121.

(*t*) Anton. Medit. book 9. ſect. 41. Glaſgow tranſlation.

that a wiſe man is happy under the greateſt pains and tortures; but then they ſuppoſed happineſs to conſiſt wholly in virtue, that this is the only good, and that pain is no evil at all. Epicurus alſo held, that a wiſe man may be perfectly happy under the extremity of pain; and yet he made happineſs conſiſt in pleaſure, and that the being freed from pain is a neceſſary ingredient in true happineſs. And can any thing be more abſurd and inconſiſtent than to ſuppoſe that a man enjoys a complete felicity at that very inſtant when he is labouring under what, according to his ſcheme of principles, is the greateſt evil and miſery?

I do not think there ever was a greater inſtance of vain-glory, than appears in Epicurus's laſt letter, written by him when he was dying to one of his friends and diſciples, Idomeneus; in which he tells him, "that he was then paſſing the laſt and happieſt "day of his life: that he was under ſuch tormenting pains of the "ſtone or ſtrangury (*u*), that nothing could exceed them; but "that this was fully compenſated by the pleaſure he found in his "mind, ariſing from the remembrance of his own philoſophical "reaſonings and inventions." And what were thoſe doctrines and inventions of his, which yielded him ſuch a wonderful joy, as rendered him completely happy under the extremeſt pains and dying agonies? The principal of them ſeem to have been ſuch

(*u*) So ſome underſtand it: Cicero has it, pains in his bladder and bowels. "Tanti morbi aderant veſicæ et viſcerum, ut nihil ad earum magnitudinem poſſit "accedere." De Finib. lib. ii. cap. 30.

as theſe: That the world was made not by any wiſe deſigning cauſe, but by chance, and a fortuitous concourſe of atoms: that there is no Providence which exerciſes any care about mankind: that the ſoul dies with the body, and that there is no life after this: that pleaſure is the chief good, and pain the greateſt evil. And what comfort theſe principles could furniſh in theſe circumſtances, is difficult to conceive.

This ſhews how far he carried that vanity to the laſt, for which he had been always ſo remarkable. To his vanity it was owing, that he was deſirous to have it thought that he was himſelf his own teacher, and learned his philoſophy from no man; though it is generally agreed among the antients, that he borrowed the principal things in his philoſophy from others, eſpecially from Democritus (*x*). He affected not to quote any authors in his works, and exalted himſelf above the greateſt men of his age, as if none of them were capable of directing men in the way to true happineſs but himſelf alone. His envy at the reputation of other philoſophers, carried him to treat ſome of the moſt eminent of them in a contemptuous and abuſive manner, of which Cicero mentions ſeveral inſtances (*y*). Plutarch obſerves the ſame thing in his treatiſe againſt Colotes, a noted diſciple and follower of Epicurus. The ſame vanity, and deſire of being remembered with admiration and applauſe, appears in his laſt teſtament; in

(*x*) Cicero de Finib. lib. iv. cap. 6.

(*y*) De Nat. Deor. lib. i. cap. 33.

which

which he ordered, that the anniverſary of his birth-day ſhould be kept every year; and that, beſides this, on the twentieth day of every month his diſciples ſhould meet and feaſt together, to celebrate the memory of him and his great intimate and favourite Metrodorus. Cicero juſtly repreſents the making ſuch proviſions as theſe, as a very extraordinary thing in a man who taught that death, and what follows after it, is nothing to us (*z*). But it is plain, that though he was for extinguiſhing in men "the deſire "of immortality," yet he coveted for himſelf an immortal fame. And thoſe of his ſect were not wanting to ſatisfy that deſire of his as far as was in their power. They in effect were for making a god of Epicurus, for delivering them from the fear of other gods; and whilſt they laughed at ſuperſtition and enthuſiaſm, they themſelves talked of Epicurus and his philoſophy in the moſt enthuſiaſtic ſtrains: "Freeing ourſelves (ſays Metrodorus) from this low ter- "reſtrial life, let us riſe to the truly divine orgia, or ſacred myſteries, "of Epicurus."—Τὰ Ἐπικούρου ὡς ἀληθῶς θεόφαντα ὄργια (*a*). The Epicureans, as we learn from Cicero, had his image on their cups and rings (*b*). And Pliny tells us, that in his time, which was three hundred and fifty years after the death of Epicurus, they were wont to have his image or picture in their bed-chambers, and carry it about with them; and that they continued to celebrate his birth-day with ſacrifices, and to ſolemnize feaſts every month to his

(*z*) De Finib. lib. ii. cap. 31. p. 176. et ſeq. edit. Davis.

(*a*) Plut. adverſ. Colot. Oper. tom. II. p. 1117. B. edit. Xyl.

(*b*) De Finib. lib. v. cap. 1.

honour (*c*). Numenius obſerves, that they never departed in the leaſt from the principles their maſter taught, and even thought it an impious thing to do ſo, or to bring in any new tenet (*d*).

Laertius, his great admirer, tells us, that he was honoured by his country with ſtatues of braſs; that his friends were ſo many, that whole cities could not contain them; that none of his diſciples, except one whom he mentions, ever left him to go to another ſect; that the ſucceſſion of his ſchool continued when all the reſt failed, and had ſo many maſters that they could not be numbered. He commends him for many virtues, and, among others, for his piety and devotion towards the gods (*e*). And if his other virtues were no better founded than this, they had a ſhew and appearance only without the reality. The principles of Epicurus ſeem to have ſpread very much in Rome in the latter times of the Roman republic. Many of their great men openly avowed them. Cicero, who was no great friend to Epicurus's philoſophy, frequently repreſents his followers as very numerous at Rome, and his philoſophy as having made a great progreſs there, and very popular (*f*). This gives one no advantageous idea of the religion and manners of that age. His principles continued to prevail under the emperors; and his followers were very

(*c*) Plin. Hiſt. Natur. lib. xxxv. cap. 2.

(*d*) Apud Euſeb. Præpar. Evangel. lib. xiv. cap. 5.

(*e*) Laert. lib. x. ſegm. 9, 10.

(*f*) De Finib. lib. i. cap. 7. lib. ii. cap. 25. De Offic. lib. iii. cap. ult.

zealous

zealous to propagate their opinions, for which they are ridiculed by Epictetus; becauſe, as he obſerves, if their principles were generally believed, it would endanger their own peace and ſafety as well as that of the public. Lucian informs us, that in his time the emperor, by whom he probably means Marcus Antoninus, allowed large ſalaries to the maſters of the Epicurean ſchool, as well as to thoſe of the Stoics, Platoniſts, and Peripatetics (*g*).

It appears, however, that the Epicureans did not every-where, and at all times, meet with the good reception Laertius mentions. They were expelled out of ſeveral cities, becauſe of the diſorders they occaſioned. Plutarch ſpeaks of the ψηφίσματα ϐλάσφημα πόλεων, the reproachful decrees made by divers cities againſt them (*h*). We learn from Ælian, that the Romans expelled Alcæus and Philippus, who were Epicureans, out of the city, becauſe they taught the young men to indulge ſtrange and flagitious pleaſures. And that the republic of Meſſenia in Arcadia paſſed this cenſure upon the Epicureans, that they were the peſt of the youth, and that they ſtained the government by their effeminacy and atheiſm. They enjoined them to depart their borders by ſunſet; and when they were gone, ordered the prieſts to puriſy the temples, and magiſtrates, and the whole city (*i*). The republic

(*g*) Lucian. in Eunuch. Oper. tom. I. p. 841. edit. Amſt.

(*h*) In his treatiſe Non poſſe ſuaviter vivi, &c. Oper. tom. II. p. 1100. D. edit. Xyl.

(*i*) Ælian. var. Hiſt. lib. ix. cap. 12.

of

of Lyctos, in the iſle of Crete, drove them out of the city, and iſſued out a ſevere decree againſt them, in which they called them the contrivers of the feminine and ungenerous philoſophy, and the declared enemies of the gods; and that if any one of them ſhould preſume to return, he ſhould be put to death in a manner which was very ignominious as well as painful (*k*).

(*k*) Suidas in voce Επικερος.

CHAP.

CHAP. VII.

The ſentiments of thoſe who are accounted the beſt of the Pagan moral philoſophers conſidered. They held in general, that the law is right reaſon. But reaſon alone, without a ſuperior authority, does not lay an obliging force upon men. The wiſeſt Heathens taught, that the original of law was from God, and that from him it derived its authority. As to the queſtion, how this law comes to be known to us, they ſometimes repreſent it as naturally known to all men. But the principal way of knowing it is reſolved by them into the mind and reaſon of wiſe men, or, in other words, into the doctrines and inſtructions of the philoſophers. The uncertainty of this rule of morals ſhewn. They talked highly of virtue in general, but differed about matters of great importance relating to the law of nature: ſome inſtances of which are mentioned.

LET us now proceed to conſider the ſentiments of thoſe who are generally accounted the ableſt and beſt of the Pagan philoſophers and moraliſts. Such were Socrates, Plato, and thoſe of the old academy, Ariſtotle and the Peripatetics, and above all the Stoics, who profeſſed to carry the doctrine of morals to the higheſt perfection.

It was a general maxim among the philoſophers, and which frequently occurs in their writings, that the law is right reaſon. So Plato, Cicero, Seneca, Plutarch, and others. But properly ſpeaking,

ſpeaking, right reaſon is not a law. Reaſon as ſuch only counſels, adviſes, and demonſtrates, but does not command: nor doth it lay perſons under an obligation or reſtraint of law, but by the interpoſition of a ſuperior authority. Mr. Selden has argued this matter very well, in his firſt book De Jure Nat. et Gent. in the ſeventh and eighth chapters. He ſhews, that antecedently to men's being formed into ſociety, no man can be ſo obliged by the reaſon of another man, who is only ſuppoſed to be naturally his equal, nor by the reaſon of all other men who are his equals, nor by his own reaſon, as not to have it in his power to change or alter it. For whence can a diſparity of obligation ariſe, where all men are ſuppoſed to be equal, and ſui juris, or their own maſters? Or, if we ſuppoſe them to be united into bodies politic, or civil ſocieties, and that in conſequence of this the authority of princes and of the laws has been eſtabliſhed, yet except there were ſome ſuperior right and authority, by which they ſhould be all bound to ſtand to their compacts, and yield obedience to their princes, what natural obligation could ariſe which ſhould bind them ſo ſtrongly, that they could not recede from thoſe compacts or agreements when they ſhould think it for their advantage to do ſo? They that were naturally equal cannot by any ſubſequent agreement or compact become ſo far unequal, as abſolutely to diveſt themſelves of a power or liberty to renounce thoſe compacts and agreements, and to reſume their natural rights, if there were no power or authority, ſuperior both to the individuals of the ſociety and to the whole, to bind the obſervation of their conventions upon them, and to oblige them to keep their faith once given, and puniſh their violation of it. The obligation

therefore of law muſt properly ariſe from the command and authority of the Supreme Being, ſince none but God hath a proper authority over all mankind. Mr. Selden hath produced many teſtimonies to ſhew, that the wiſeſt Heathens were ſenſible of this, and that they derived the original of law, and its obliging force, from God or the gods (*l*). Plato frequently intimates, that no mortal has a proper power of making laws, and that to Him alone it originally and properly belongs. Cicero, in his books of laws, expreſſeth himſelf fully and ſtrongly on this head: he repreſents it not only as his own opinion, but that of the wiſeſt men, that law is not originally of human inſtitution, nor enacted by the decree and authority of the people, but is an eternal thing, and proceedeth from the Sovereign Wiſdom which governeth the univerſe, commanding or forbidding with the higheſt reaſon (*m*). And in the famous paſſage quoted by Lactantius from Cicero's third book De Republicâ, ſpeaking of that univerſal law obligatory on all mankind, which he repreſents as the ſame in all nations, and which cannot be diſpenſed with or abrogated in the whole or in any part of it, nor can we be abſolved from it by the authority of ſenate or people, he adds, That " God, the common maſter and lord of

(*l*) Seld. de Jure Nat. et Gent. lib. i. cap. 8. p. 94. et ſeq. edit. Lipſ. This is alſo largely ſhewn by the learned and ingenious author of " The Knowledge of " Divine Things by Revelation only, not by Reaſon or Nature."

(*m*) " Hanc igitur video ſapientiſſimorum fuiſſe ſententiam, legem neque ho- " minum ingeniis excogitatam, nec ſcitum aliquod eſſe populorum, ſed æternum " quiddam, quod univerſum mundum regeret imperandi prohibendique ſapientiâ: " ita principum illam legem et ultimam mentem eſſe dicebant omnia ratione aut " cogentis aut vetantis Dei. Quamobrem lex vera atque princeps ad jubendum, et " vetandum ratio eſt recta ſummi Jovis." De Leg. lib. ii. cap. 4.

" all, is the inventor, the propounder, and the enactor of this " law (*n*)." And before him, Socrates, ſpeaking of certain unwritten laws, as he calls them, which are obſerved in every place or region after the ſame manner, ſays, that theſe laws were not made by men, ſince they could not all meet together for that purpoſe, nor are all of one language, but that the gods appointed thoſe laws to men (*o*).

Other teſtimonies might be added to ſhew, that the beſt and greateſt philoſophers held God to be the only univerſal legiſlator, to whom it belongeth to give laws obligatory upon all mankind. But then the queſtion naturally aroſe, how theſe divine laws come to be known to men.

Cicero, in the remarkable paſſage before referred to, quoted by Lactantius, repreſents the univerſal law he ſpeaks of, and of which he ſuppoſes God to be the Supreme Author, as naturally known to all men: that we are not to ſeek any other interpreter of it but itſelf; and he intimates that every man carries the interpretation of it in his own breaſt (*p*). This ſcheme has been already

(*n*) " Namque erit communis quaſi magiſter et imperator omnium Deus: ille " legis hujus inventor, diſceptator, lator."

(*o*) Ἐγω μὲν θεὸς οἶμαι τὸς νόμος τουτους τοῖς ἀνθρώποις θεῖναι. Xen. Memorab. lib. iv. cap. 4. ſect. 19, 20.

(*p*) " Eſt quidem vera lex recta ratio, naturæ congruens, diffuſa in omnes, " conſtans, ſempiterna, quæ vocat ad officium jubendo, vetando à fraude de- " terreat; neque ut quærendus explanator, aut interpres ejus alius." Cic. de Republ. lib. iii. Fragment. apud Lactant.

conſidered,

conſidered, and I ſhall not here repeat what I have offered to ſhew, that the hypotheſis concerning the univerſal clearneſs of the whole law of nature, as if it were ſo obvious to all men that they need no direction or inſtruction, is contrary to the moſt evident fact and experience. To what has been before obſerved on this head, I ſhall now add a remarkable teſtimony from Cicero himſelf. " If (ſays he) we had been naturally ſo formed from our " birth, that we could clearly behold nature herſelf, and under " her excellent guidance accompliſh the courſe of life, there " would have been no need of learning and inſtruction." But he goes on to ſhew, that " this is not the caſe; that nature, in- " deed, hath given us ſome ſmall ſparks, but which, being de- " praved by corrupt cuſtoms and wrong opinions, we ſoon ex- " tinguiſh, ſo that the light of nature no-where appears (*q*)." And he afterwards repreſents vice as having the conſent of the multitude on its ſide; and that popular fame is for the moſt part inconſiderate and raſh, and an applauder of ſins and vices (*r*). And from thence he argues the great uſefulneſs and excellency of philoſophy, for inſtructing and directing mankind, and healing the diſtempers of the mind.

(*q*) " Quod ſi tales nos natura genuiſſet, ut eam ipſam intueri et perſpicere, " eâdemque optumâ duce curſum vitæ conficere poſſemus, haud ſanè erat quod " quiſquam rationem et doctrinam requireret. Nunc parvulos nobis dedit igni- " culos, quos celeriter malis moribus opinionibuſque depravati, ſic reſtinguimus, " ut nuſquàm naturæ lumen appareat." Tuſcul. Diſput. lib. iii. cap. 2.

(*r*) " Quaſi maximus quidam magiſter populus, atque omnis undique ad vitia " conſentiens multitudo; temeraria atque inconſiderata, et plerumque peccantium " vitiorumque laudatrix fama popularis." Ibid.

It is an obſervation of the learned and ingenious Dr. Middleton, that Cicero " took the ſyſtem of the world, or the viſible works " of God, to be the promulgation of God's law, or the declara- " tion of God's will to mankind: whence, as we might collect " his being, nature, and attributes, ſo we could trace the reaſons " alſo and motives of his acting, till, by obſerving what he had " done, we might learn what we ought to do, and by the opera- " tions of the Divine Reaſon be inſtructed how to perfect our " own; ſince the perfection of man conſiſteth in the imitation of " God (*s*)." " I believe (ſays Cicero, in the perſon of Cato) " that the immortal gods have diſperſed ſouls into human bodies, " that there might be beings who ſhould behold the earth, and " contemplate the order of the heavens, and be thereby engaged " to imitate that order in the regularity and conſtancy of their " lives (*t*)." To the ſame purpoſe he elſewhere obſerves, that " man was originally made for contemplating the world, and imi- " tating it (*u*)." And that " the contemplation and knowledge " of the heavens, and the orderly diſpoſition of things, teaches " men modeſty, greatneſs of mind, and juſtice (*x*)." But what- ever influence this might have upon ſome philoſophical and con- templative minds, how few are there that can read their duty in

(*s*) Life of Cicero, Vol. II. ſect. 12. p. 619. Dublin edit.

(*t*) " Credo deos immortales ſparſiſſe animos in corpora humana, ut eſſent qui " terras tuerentur, quique cœleſtium ordinem contemplantes imitarentur eum vitæ " modo et conſtantiâ." Cato Major, ſive De Senectute, cap. 21.

(*u*) " Ipſe homo ortus eſt ad mundum contemplandum et imitandum." De Nat. Deor. lib. ii. cap. 14.

(*x*) De Finib. lib. iv. cap. 5.

the

the heavens, or collect it from the order and harmony of the celestial bodies? To refer the bulk of mankind to this for direction in morals, would be of small advantage, and would give to them, or even to philosophers themselves, little light or instruction with respect to the particulars of their duty.

Accordingly, many of the Heathens were sensible, that they needed a more particular and explicit declaration of the Divine Will and Law. The most eminent legislators, as was before observed, pretended to have received the laws they delivered to the people by communication from the gods, in order to give them the greater weight and authority: or, which amounted to the same thing, had them approved by oracles, which were looked upon as making authentic declarations of the Divine Will. To those oracles the people had frequent recourse for direction, and in this they were encouraged by the philosophers themselves. Socrates, as Xenophon informs us, was wont to consult the oracle, to know the will of the gods, and especially the Delphian oracle (*y*). Plato ascribes "the first, the greatest, and most excellent laws and in-"stitutions," τὰ τε μέγιστα καὶ κάλλιστα καὶ ὠφέλιμα τῶν νομοθετημάτων, to Apollo at Delphi. And he has a particular reference to the establishing of temples and sacrifices, and the several kinds of worship rendered to the gods, dæmons, and heroes, and whatever was necessary for rendering them propitious. "Of these things "(says he) we ourselves know nothing. And in ordering the "city, we shall, if we be wise, believe no other, nor use any

(*y*) See concerning this vol. I. chap. XV.

"other

" other guide than the patron god:" by which he means Apollo, of whom he had ſpoken juſt before (z)." To this it may be added, that the philoſophers univerſally repreſented it as the will of the gods, and which was preſcribed by the oracles, that all men ſhould conform to the laws of their country, both in religious and civil matters; and what falſe guides theſe were in many caſes, and how unfit to furniſh a proper rule of duty, has been ſufficiently ſhewn.

Another way which the philoſophers propoſed for leading men into the knowledge of the Divine Law and of Moral Duty, was by the dictates and inſtructions of wiſe men, that is, of the philoſophers themſelves. Thus Cicero, in his treatiſe of laws, after having ſaid that the ſupreme original law is the reaſon and authority of the ſupreme eternal mind, obſerves, that from thence is derived the law which the gods have given to mankind, which law he explains to be " the mind and reaſon of a wiſe man, fitly " diſpoſed for commanding that which is good, and deterring " from evil.—Ex quâ [i. e. ratione Dei] illa lex quam dii hu- " mano generi dederunt, rectè eſt laudato: eſt enim ratio menſ- " que ſapientis ad jubendum et deterrendum idonea (a)." And again, he ſays, That " as the divine mind is the ſupreme law, ſo " when it is in man, it is perfect in the mind of a wiſe man.— " Ut illa divina mens ſumma lex eſt, ita cum in homine eſt,

(z) Plato de Republ. lib. v. Oper. p. 448. edit. Lugd.

(a) Cic. de Leg. lib. ii. cap. 4. p. 86. edit. Davis.

" perfecta eſt in mente ſapientis (*b*)." And he there argues, that right reaſon is the ſame in God and man; and that there is a community of right and law between them, as belonging to one city. " For (ſaith he) this whole world is to be regarded as one " common city of gods and men." In this he followed the Stoics, whoſe ſcheme was this; That the original of law and right is reaſon: that the reaſon of God is the higheſt law: and the reaſon of God and of the wiſe man is the ſame. So that in the iſſue law is reſolved, with reſpect to our knowledge of it, into the reaſon of a wiſe man. Hence the high encomiums beſtowed by Cicero and others upon philoſophy, as the beſt and greateſt gift of the gods, the inventreſs of laws, the guide of life, and the knowledge of things divine and human.

But though the philoſophers ſaid ſuch glorious things of the univerſal law, the law of God and reaſon, and ſuppoſed it to be perfect in the mind of the wiſe man, yet when they came more particularly to explain what the law of right reaſon requires, they differed mightily about it. They talked in an excellent manner of virtue in general, but it is not true what ſome modern writers have affirmed, that they all agreed what is virtue, and what is vice (*c*). There is a remarkable paſſage in Plato's Phædrus, which it may not be amiſs to mention here. Socrates aſks Phædrus, " When any one names ſilver or iron, do not all underſtand the " ſame thing by it?" Phædrus acknowledges that it was ſo.

(*b*) Cic. de Leg. lib. ii. cap. 4. p. 88. edit. Davis.

(*c*) Bolingbroke's Works, Vol. V. p. 204, 205. edit. 4to.

" But

" But (ſays Socrates) when a man ſpeaks of that which is juſt " or good, is not one man carried one way, and another another, " and we differ from one another, and even from ourſelves?"— Ἀλλ' ἄλλη φέρεται, καὶ ἀμφισβητοῦσι τοῦτο ἀλλήλοις, καὶ ἡμῖν αὐτοῖς (*d*). Maximus Tyrius ſeems to have had this paſſage in view, when he ſaith, That " the ſame thing is not good or evil to all, nor is " the ſame thing baſe or honourable to all men." And ſpeaking of law, and right, or juſtice, he declares, that " neither nation " agreeth with nation in theſe things, nor city with city, nor fa- " mily with family, nor one man with another, nor the ſame " man with himſelf (*e*)." And with regard to the philoſophers themſelves, ſome of the moſt celebrated of them, as will be ſhewn afterwards, approved things as permitted by the law of nature, which others condemned as contrary to it.

Socrates, in a paſſage before referred to, ſpeaks of unwritten laws, which he ſuppoſes to be of divine original, and to be obſerved by all men in every region after the ſame manner (*f*). But this can only be underſtood of a few general maxims and principles: and even with reſpect to theſe, when they came to be explained, there was far from being an univerſal agreement.

The firſt article of that unwritten law mentioned by Socrates, and which he ſeems to make the chief and the moſt univerſally

(*d*) Plato Opera, p. 351. F. edit. Lugd.

(*e*) Differt. 1. p. 5. Oxon.

(*f*) Xen. Memor. Socr. lib. iv. cap. 4. ſect. 19.

acknowledged,

acknowledged, is, " that the gods ſhould be worſhipped."— Παρὰ πᾶσιν ἀνθρώποις πρῶτον νομίζεται τὸς θεὸς σέβειν. He doth not repreſent the law thus, that we are to worſhip God, but that we are to worſhip the gods: as if polytheiſm, or the worſhip of many gods, was the firſt law of nature (*g*). It has been often ſaid, and many paſſages of the antients are produced to that purpoſe, that there has been a general conſent or agreement among all nations, the moſt barbarous not excepted, in the acknowledgement of a Deity. And it is true that they have generally agreed in the notion of a ſuperior, inviſible Divine Power or Powers; but not ſo generally as ſome have repreſented it, in the belief of one Supreme God: though many of them had ſome notion of this, and there was an antient tradition concerning it, which had ſpread far and wide, and never was entirely extinguiſhed. But when we proceed to examine more particularly into the ideas they had of the Divinity, or of ſuperior inviſible powers, and the worſhip that was to be rendered to them, here we ſhall find a great difference. Plutarch obſerves, That " poets, philoſophers, and

(*g*) Lord Herbert de Relig. Gentil. makes the firſt articles of his catholic univeral religion, acknowledged by all mankind, to be theſe, That there is one Supreme God, and that he is chiefly to be worſhipped. Lord Bolingbroke carries it farther, and ſays, That " the religion and law of nature ſhews us the Supreme Being, ma- " nifeſted in all his works to be the true and only object of adoration." And if this be the law of nature, that God only is to be worſhipped, it is evident, that the greateſt among the Pagan philoſophers were ſo far from agreeing univerſally in this, that they univerſally neglected and counteracted it, by worſhipping a multiplicity of deities, and encouraging others to do ſo. And this, as was before obſerved, is a plain confutation of what his Lordſhip has confidently affirmed, That " there is not one moral precept in the whole Goſpel, which was not taught by " the philoſophers." See Bolingbroke's Works, Vol. V. p. 97, 98. compared with p. 205.

" lawgivers, were all along the firſt that inſtructed and con-
" firmed us in our opinion of the gods. For all agree that there
" are gods: but concerning their number, their order, their eſ-
" ſence, and power, they vaſtly differ from one another. The
" philoſophers differ from the poets and lawgivers, and theſe
" from them." See his Amator. Oper. tom. II. p. 763. C. D. edit. Xyl. Francof. 1620.

Another inſtance produced by Socrates of an univerſal unwritten law obſerved in every region after the ſame manner, is that of honouring our parents. And in this mankind have generally agreed: and yet they have differed in their obſervation of this law. In ſeveral nations in antient times, they were wont to expoſe or deſtroy their ſick and aged parents, pretending that this was better for them than to wait for their natural deaths. The ſame cuſtom is ſtill obſerved among ſome nations, particularly thoſe that inhabit the countries near the Cape of Good Hope. Socrates alſo ſuppoſes it to be a part of the natural univerſal law, that parents ſhould not have carnal commerce with their children, nor children with their parents. And yet it is well known, that there were ſome nations, particularly the Perſians (*b*), who in other reſpects had many good

(*b*) St. Jerom attributes the cuſtom of inceſtuous marriages to the Medes, Indians, Æthiopians, lib. ii. adverſ. Jovinian. Oper. tom. II. p. 75. edit. Baſil. See Grot. de Jure Belli et Pacis, lib. ii. cap. 5. ſect. 12. who obſerves, that Euripides, in his Andromache, ſpeaks of it as a cuſtom general among the barbarians. See alſo Selden de Jure Nat. et Gent. lib. v. cap. 11. And it appears from Levit. chap. xviii. that theſe practices were common among the Canaanites and other neighbouring nations; which ſhews the great propriety of prohibiting theſe things by an expreſs divine law, enforced by the authority of God himſelf, and by powerful ſanctions.

laws,

laws, among whom this was done without ſcruple. And the Perſian magi, who were eſteemed very wiſe men and great philoſophers, allowed and approved theſe and other inceſtuous mixtures (*i*). So did ſome of the principal Stoics, as Sextus Empiricus and Plutarch inform us (*k*).

That parents ſhould love and nouriſh, and take care of their children, may be alſo juſtly regarded as a law of nature; and yet the practice of expoſing and deſtroying their children was common, as I have ſhewn, even among the moſt civilized nations, approved and even required by ſome of the moſt famous legiſlators, and wiſeſt philoſophers.

Other inſtances might be mentioned in relation to things, which, one ſhould be apt to think, are plain from the law of nature, concerning which yet ſome of the moſt eminent philoſophers have paſſed very wrong judgments. This ſhews, that even men of the greateſt abilities, if left merely to their own unaſſiſted reaſon, are apt to miſtake in matters of great conſequence in morality, and that their dictates and inſtructions could not furniſh a complete rule of duty that might be ſafely depended upon. This will farther appear from the inſtances which ſhall be brought in the following chapter, of great errors which they have actually fallen into with regard to morals.

(*i*) Laert. Proœm. ſegm. 7.

(*k*) Pyrrhon. Hypotyp. lib. iii. cap. 24. Plutarch. Stoic. Repugn. Oper. tom. II. p. 1044, 1045.

CHAP. VIII.

Epictetus's obſervation concerning the difficulty of applying general preconceptions to particular caſes, verified in the antient philoſophers. They were generally wrong with reſpect to the duty and worſhip proper to be rendered to God, though they themſelves acknowledged it to be a point of the higheſt importance. As to ſocial duties, ſome eminent philoſophers pleaded for revenge and againſt forgiveneſs of injuries. But eſpecially they were deficient in that part of moral duty which relates to the government of the ſenſual appetites and paſſions. Many of the philoſophers countenanced by their principles and practice the moſt unnatural luſts and vices. Thoſe of them that did not carry it ſo far, yet encouraged an impurity inconſiſtent with the ſtrictneſs and dignity of virtue. Plato very culpable in this reſpect, ſo alſo were the Cynics and Stoics. Simple fornication generally allowed amongſt them. Our modern deiſts very looſe in their principles with regard to ſenſual impurities.

IT is an obſervation of that excellent philoſopher Epictetus, That " the cauſe of all human evils is the not being able to " adapt general preconceptions to particular caſes (*l*)." This he frequently repeats. By preconceptions, προλήψεις, he underſtands general common notions, which the Stoics ſuppoſed to be originally and naturally implanted in the human mind. He inſtances

(*l*) Epictet. Diſſert. book iv. chap. 1. ſect. 8.

in

in theſe, that good is eligible, and to be purſued; that juſtice is fair and becoming. In theſe and the like general principles and maxims men of all ages and nations agree. But in applying theſe general notions there is great difference: and the beſt education conſiſts in learning to do this properly. See the 22d chapter of the firſt book of his Diſſertations. This is alſo the ſubject of the 11th and 17th chapters of his ſecond book, where having obſerved that we have natural ideas and preconceptions of good and juſt, he repreſents it as the proper buſineſs of philoſophy, to inſtruct men how to apply ſuch preconceptions in a right manner: and that it is not poſſible to do this as we ought, without having minutely diſtinguiſhed them, and examined what is the proper ſubject to each. But it is no hard matter to ſhew, that the philoſophers themſelves frequently erred in their application of general notions and maxims (*m*), and were wrong themſelves, and led others wrong in matters of great conſequence, with regard to the

(*m*) Though Lord Bolingbroke frequently aſſerts the univerſal clearneſs of the law of nature, and, in a paſſage mentioned above, intimates that all men have an intuitive knowledge of it, from the firſt principles to the laſt concluſions, yet he elſewhere makes this acknowledgment, that "when we make particular appli-"cations of the general laws of nature, we are very liable to miſtake." He adds, "That there are things fit and unfit, right and wrong, juſt and unjuſt, in the "human ſyſtem, and diſcernible by human reaſon, as far as our natural imper-"fections admit, I acknowledge moſt readily. But from the difficulty we have "to judge, and from the uncertainty of our judgments in a multitude of caſes "which lie within our bounds, I would demonſtrate the folly of thoſe who affect "to have knowledge beyond them. They are unable, on many occaſions, to de-"duct from the conſtitution of their own ſyſtem, and the laws of their own na-"ture, with preciſion and certainty, what theſe require of them, and what is right "or wrong, juſt or unjuſt, for them to do." Bolingbroke's Works, Vol. V. p. 444. edit. 4to.

particulars

particulars of moral duty: which ſhews the great need they ſtood in of a ſuperior authority and direction.

Many of the philoſophers were ſenſible in general of the great importance of the duties we owe to the Deity: that, as Hierocles ſpeaks, piety is the mother of all virtues. Cicero in his Offices, in repreſenting the order of duties, places thoſe relating to the gods in the firſt place, before thoſe we owe to our country, and to our parents (*n*). Yet it is obſervable, that in that book, which is one of the moſt excellent moral treatiſes that was written by any of the philoſophers, he very ſlightly paſſes over the duties relating to the Divinity. He ſometimes, though ſeldom, makes mention of the gods, but takes no notice of the one Supreme God. No where does he in that treatiſe draw any arguments or motives to enforce the practice of duty from the authority and command of God, but merely from the beauty and excellency of the Honeſtum, and the evil and turpitude of vice. It is a juſt obſervation of Mr. Locke, that " the philoſophers who ſpoke from reaſon, make not " much mention of the Deity in their ethics (*o*)." The Stoics, indeed, gave precepts of piety, which would have been excellent, if they had been directed not to the gods, but to the one true God. But of theſe I ſhall treat diſtinctly afterwards. The philoſophers generally acknowledged, that God, or the gods, as they uſually expreſſed it, were to be worſhipped. But what kind of worſhip

(*n*) De Offic. lib. i. cap. ult. And to the ſame purpoſe, ibid. lib. ii. cap. 3.

(*o*) Locke's Reaſonableneſs of Chriſtianity, in his Works, Vol. II. p. 534. edit. 3d.

this

ths ſhould be, they were greatly at a loſs to know. Some of them, under pretence of the moſt exalted thoughts of the Divinity, were only for worſhipping inwardly in the mind, and were not for rendering any outward worſhip to the Supreme Being, or Him whom they call the Higheſt God of all. Others, in accommodation to the imaginations of the people, were for worſhipping the Divinity by images and groſs corporeal repreſentations. Many were for rendering religious worſhip to the things of nature and parts of the univerſe, under pretence of worſhipping God in them, as being either parts and members of the Divinity, or animated by his powers and virtues. They all in general encouraged the worſhip of a multiplicity of deities; and with reſpect to the particular rites of worſhip, they referred the people to the deciſion of oracles, and to the laws of their reſpective countries; though ſome of thoſe rites were no way fit to make a part of that worſhip, which reaſonable creatures ſhould offer to a pure and perfect mind (*p*).

An

(*p*) Plato, in his Euthyphro, ſays, that holineſs and piety is that part of juſtice which is converſant about the ſervice and worſhip of the gods: the other part of juſtice is that which relates to men *. As to the former, he does not in that dialogue give any directions what kind of worſhip and ſervice is to be rendered to the gods. But in other parts of his works, he is for the people's worſhipping the gods appointed by the laws of the ſtate, and in the manner there preſcribed. It is true, that the Platoniſts ſpeak in high ſtrains of what they call their divine virtue, as diſtinguiſhed from that which is ethical and political: they alſo talk frequently of aſſimilation to God. Plato, in his Theætetus, ſeems to have placed this in holineſs and juſtice, together with prudence †. But the moſt eminent of his followers, thoſe eſpecially that lived after Chriſtianity had made ſome progreſs in the world, ſeem not to underſtand this of a piety or virtue which the people were ſuppoſed

* Plato Opera, p. 52. F. edit. Lugd. 1590. † Ibid. p. 128. C.

capable

An oath has been always accounted a ſacred thing, and regarded as a ſolemn appeal to the Divinity. In the law of Moſes it is required as a part of the religious homage due to the Supreme Being, to ſwear by his name, when it is neceſſary to do ſo; and the ſwearing by other gods is forbidden (*q*). No precept of this kind is to be found in the writings of the Pagan philoſophers and moraliſts: nor do they any-where forbid ſwearing by the creatures, which is condemned by our Saviour (*r*). Dr. Potter, in his excellent Greek Antiquities, obſerves concerning Socrates, that he told his diſciples, that Rhadamanthus, the juſteſt man that ever lived, had diſapproved men's ſwearing by the gods, but inſtead

capable of attaining to: nor will they allow this to have been Plato's ſenſe. They ſo explain their divine virtue, as to make it of little uſe to the people. It belonged properly to the philoſophers, and was chiefly of a theoretical nature, conſiſting in abſtracted contemplations of the Platonic intelligible gods, the eternal ideas and archetypal forms of things, and the τ' ἀγαθὸν, which is to be diſcerned by a "bonitorm "light," as Plotinus calls it, and which he repreſents as above intellect *. They placed the height of their divine virtue or deiform life in a perfect apathy †, and an abſolute abſtractedneſs from all material objects, as if all body and matter were in itſelf a pollution, and of a contaminating nature. They contrived alſo methods of purging and purifying the ſoul, and raiſing it to communion with the gods, by what they called theurgy. And it is to be obſerved, that amidſt all their ſublimities, and though ſome of them roſe to extravagant flights of myſticiſm and enthuſiaſm, they made no attempts to reclaim the people from the common idolatry, but endeavoured ſo to model their philoſophy and theology, as to countenance and uphold the Pagan ſyſtem of ſuperſtition and polytheiſm. But it is the great advantage of the Goſpel Revelation, that the piety and conformity to God which it requires, is ſuch as the generality of good men are capable of, whom it teaches to form the moſt juſt and worthy notions of the Deity, and to worſhip him in ſpirit and in truth.

(*q*) Deut. vi. 13. Joſh. xxiii. 7.

(*r*) Matt. v. 35, 36, 37. James v. 12.

* Plotin. Enn. VI. lib. viii. cap. 15. † Enn. I. lib. i. cap. 7. 15.

of this, allowed them to ſwear by a dog, a gooſe, a ram, or ſuch like creatures. And accordingly that philoſopher was wont to ſwear, either by animals, as by a gooſe, by a goat, by a dog, or, as he ſometimes expreſſes it, by the dog which the Egyptians worſhipped: ſometimes he ſwears by a plant, as an oak, or a plane-tree (*s*). Though, if Plato repreſents him right, he alſo ſwears by the gods, by Juno, and frequently by Jupiter; of which there are ſeveral inſtances in one of his moſt remarkable dialogues, which is intituled, Euthyphron. It was a ſaying of Plato, Ὅρκῳ περὶ πάντῳ ἀπέστω. "Juramentum præ omnibus abſit," as Grotius renders it (*t*); where he ſeems to adviſe the abſtaining from all oaths. And yet, certain it is, that oaths every-where abound in Plato's works. Zeno, the father of the Stoics, was wont to ſwear μὴ τὴν κάππαριν, by a ſhrub that bears capers. It is an advice of Epictetus, "Avoid ſwearing as much as poſſible; if not, as far "as you are able." This probably is to be underſtood of ſwearing before a magiſtrate, which ſome of the philoſophers, and particularly the Pythagoreans, diſapproved. Yet he himſelf ſwears in his diſcourſes, particularly by heaven, and by Jupiter, and by all the gods (*u*). Marcus Antoninus alſo ſwears by Jupiter, and by the gods (*x*). The emperor Julian frequently ſwears by the gods. Pythagoras rarely ſwore by the gods, or allowed his diſ-

(*s*) Potteri Archæolog. Græc. Vol. I. book ii. chap. 6. p. 215. firſt edit.

(*t*) Grotius in Matt. v. 34.

(*u*) Epict. Diſſert. book ii. chap. 19. ſect. 8. et ibid. chap. 20. ſect. 6. and in other paſſages.

(*x*) Antonin. book v. ſect. 5. et book vii. ſect. 17. and elſewhere.

ciples to do ſo. But they uſed to ſwear νὴ τὴν τετρᾴκτυν, by the tetractys, or the number four. But whatever was the meaning of the tetractys, in the explication of which the Pythagoreans themſelves were not agreed, the ſwearing by the tetractys was ſo underſtood by them, as to include the ſwearing by him that taught them the tetractys, i. e. by Pythagoras himſelf (*y*). Hierocles, in his commentary on the golden verſes of Pythagoras, in explaining that precept, σέβα ἔχειν, "reverence an oath," gives good directions about oaths, that we ought not only to keep our oaths when we make them, but to abſtain from ſwearing, and not accuſtom ourſelves to it (*z*). Yet afterwards, commenting upon that part of thoſe verſes which relates to the ſwearing by the author of their inſtitution, who taught them the tetractys, Hierocles thinks it reaſonable, that ſo much honour ſhould be done to the maſter who taught them the truth, as to ſwear by him, whenever it was needful, for the confirmation of his doctrine; and not only to pronounce, that he taught them thoſe doctrines, but to ſwear that they were true. For that though he was not of the number of the immortal gods or heroes, he was adorned with the ſimilitude of the gods, and retained among his diſciples the image of the Divine Authority: and that therefore they ſwore by him in great matters, to ſhew how much he was honoured by them, and what dignity he had acquired by the doctrines he delivered (*a*).

(*y*) Stanley's Hiſt. of Philoſ. p. 516. edit. 2d, Lond.

(*z*) Hierocles in Aur. Carm. p. 31 et 32. edit. Needham. Cantab.

(*a*) Ibid. p. 169, 170.

As

As to the civil and ſocial duties, which men owe to one another, the abſolute neceſſity of this part of morals to the welfare, and in ſome reſpects to the being of ſociety, helped, no doubt, to preſerve the ſenſe of them in ſome conſiderable degree among mankind. The philoſophers ſaid excellent things, and gave many good inſtructions and directions concerning them. And the meaſures of juſt and unjuſt, of right and wrong, were for the moſt part ſettled by the civil laws, as far as was neceſſary for the preſervation of public order.

The philoſophers frequently ſpeak of that benevolence which ſhould unite men to one another, and repreſent all mankind as formed and deſigned by nature for mutual aſſiſtance, and an intercourſe of kind offices. Yet in this, as well as other inſtances, they were not always conſiſtent with themſelves, and fell ſhort of that noble univerſal benevolence which the Goſpel requires. In Plato's fifth Republic, Socrates is introduced as ſaying, That the Greeks ſhould look upon one another as brethren of the ſame family and kindred; but upon the barbarians, which was a name they beſtowed upon all nations but themſelves, as ſtrangers and aliens: that the Greeks were φύσει φίλοι, by nature friends; and therefore they ſhould not go to war with one another, or if they did, they ſhould do it as if they were one day to be reconciled; but that the barbarians were πολέμιοι φύσει, enemies by nature, with whom they were to be continually at war: that therefore it would be wrong for the Græcians to deſtroy Græcians, to reduce them to

ſlavery, or to waſte their fields, or burn their houſes; but that they ſhould do all this to the barbarians (*b*).

The forgiving thoſe that have injured us, is a noble part of that benevolence which men ſhould exerciſe towards one another. Some of the moſt eminent philoſophers were ſenſible of this. Plato lays it down as a maxim, in his Crito, that a man when provoked by an injury ought by no means to retaliate it. And Maximus Tyrius has a whole diſſertation in defence of that maxim. Grotius has collected other teſtimonies to the ſame purpoſe (*c*). But above all, Epictetus and Marcus Antoninus have given excellent leſſons on this head. But there were other philoſophers of great name, who taught a different doctrine. Among the moral maxims of Democritus, one is this, which Stobæus has preſerved, That "it is the work of prudence to prevent an injury, "and of indolence, when it is done, not to revenge it." Ariſtotle ſpeaks of meekneſs as ſeeming to err by defect; "becauſe the "meek man is not apt to avenge himſelf, but rather to forgive." —Ὁυ γὰρ τιμωρητικὸς ὁ πρᾶος, ἀλλα μᾶλλον συγγνωμονικὸς (*d*). Anger was uſually deſcribed by the philoſophers, ὄρεξις ἀντιλυπήσεως, a deſire of revenge, or returning the evil. Cicero tranſlates it, "ulciſcendi libido (*e*)." The ſame great philoſopher and moraliſt repreſents it as the firſt thing that juſtice requires, "that no

(*b*) Plato Opera, p. 464. G. 465. A. edit. Lugd. 1590.

(*c*) Grot. in Mat. v. 39.

(*d*) Ethic. ad Nicomach. lib. iv. cap. 11. Oper. tom. II. p. 53. edit. Paris.

(*e*) Tuſcul. Diſput. lib. iii. cap. 5. et lib. iv. cap. 19.

"man

" man ſhould hurt another, unleſs he be provoked by an injury.—
" Juſtitiæ primum munus eſt, ut ne cui quis noceat, niſi laceſſitus
" injuriâ (*f*)." And again, he gives it as the character of a good man, that " he does good to thoſe whom it is in his power to
" ſerve, and hurts no man unleſs he be provoked by an injury.—
" Eum virum bonum eſſe, qui proſit quibus poſſit; noceat ne-
" mini niſi laceſſitus injuriâ (*g*)." And he declares to his friend Atticus concerning himſelf, that " he would avenge each of the
" evil deeds that were done him, according to the provocations
" he received.—Sic ulciſcar facinora ſingula quemadmodum à
" quibuſque ſum provocatus." But it may be proper here to take notice of a paſſage in his Offices, where he declares for ſetting bounds to revenge. " There are certain offices (ſays he) to be
" obſerved towards thoſe from whom we have received an injury;
" for there is a meaſure to be kept in avenging and puniſhing:
" and for aught I know, it may be ſufficient, if he that did the
" injury repents of it, ſo that both he himſelf may abſtain from
" doing the like for the future, and that others may be diſ-
" couraged from attempting to injure us (*h*)." He ſeems here to intimate, that if the man that did the injury repented of it, this might perhaps be a ſufficient ſatisfaction; but he tacks two things to it as the conditions of forgiveneſs; one is, that the man ſhould

(*f*) De Offic. lib. i. cap. 7.

(*g*) Ibid. lib. iii. cap. 19.

(*h*) " Sunt quædam officia etiam adverſus eos ſervanda, à quibus injuriam ac-
" ceperis. Eſt enim ulciſcendi et puniendi modus. Atque haud ſcio an ſatis ſit,
" cum qui laceſſiverit injuriæ ſuæ pœnitere, ut et ipſe ne quid tale poſthac commit-
" tat, et cæteri ſint ad injuriam tardiores." De Offic. lib. i. cap. 11.

never

never do the like again; the other is, that others might be deterred from injuring us; and this might open a large ſcope for retaliation of injuries. Here there ſeems to be no room left for forgiving or paſſing by repeated injuries. On this ſuppoſition, a man might forgive one that had injured him once, but not if he ſhould injure him a ſecond time. And how different this is from the Goſpel doctrine of forgiveneſs, I need not take pains to ſhew.

It is obſervable, that when Plato introduces Socrates in his Crito, ſaying excellent things concerning the forgiveneſs of injuries, and againſt the returning injury for injury, he at the ſame time owns, that what he taught was contrary to the ſentiments of the οἱ πολλοι, the generality of mankind. And what authority could he pretend to, which ſhould oblige men to regard his opinion as a law, eſpecially when it was contradicted by other philoſophers? And ſo it is alſo by ſeveral of thoſe among the moderns, who have been admired as great maſters of reaſon. Mr. Bayle pretends, that the precept prohibiting revenge, though delivered in the Goſpel, is contrary to the law of nature. The ſame thing is aſſerted by many of our deiſts, who profeſs to be governed by the law of nature and reaſon. Dr. Tindal, particularly, makes the doctrine of forgiving injuries an objection againſt the Goſpel morality. I have elſewhere examined his objections, and vindicated the doctrine of the Goſpel on this head, againſt the cenſures and miſrepreſentations of that author (*i*). At preſent I ſhall only

(*i*) See Anſwer to Chriſtianity as old as the Creation, Vol. II. chap. 9. p. 232. et. ſeq. 2d edit.

obſerve,

obſerve, that it hence appears how far men would be from agreeing in this point, if left merely to judge of it by their own reaſon. And yet it is of no ſmall importance in morals. And to leave men to themſelves, to act in this matter as they ſhould think fit, would be to open a wide door to that malice and revenge, and reciprocation of injuries, which hath produced ſuch infinite miſchiefs in the world, and hath often diſturbed, and continueth ſtill to diſturb, the peace and order of ſocieties. It was therefore a worthy object of a Divine Revelation to reſtrain private revenge by a Divine Command. And ſo ſtrong is the diſpoſition towards it, that all the reſtraints that can be laid upon it are no more than is neceſſary. And the doctrine of our Lord in reſpect to this, when duly conſidered, appears to be excellent, and becoming the great Saviour and Lover of mankind.

But there was no part of morals, in which the philoſophers were more generally deficient, than in that which relates to the regulating the ſenſual paſſions, and maintaining a virtuous chaſtity and purity of manners. Some of them, indeed, talked in very high terms of the neceſſity of governing the fleſhly appetites, in order to the preſerving the due order and dignity of the rational nature: but notwithſtanding this, when they came to apply theſe general rules to particular caſes, they were often ſhamefully wrong and defective, and countenanced impurities which diſhonoured human nature. It is an obſervation of Sir John Marſham, and which may be ſupported by good authorities, That "all manner "of inceſt, adultery, and even maſculine mixtures, were reckoned "by ſome of the antients, who were famous for wiſdom, among "indifferent

" indifferent things.—Inceſtus omnigenus, adulterium, et etiam " ἀρσενομιξία, veterum nonnullis, ſapientiæ nomine claris, inter " ἀδιάφορα habebantur (*k*)."

That abominable and unnatural vice, which, I have ſhewn, was very common in Greece, and which, Xenophon tells us, was in ſome cities eſtabliſhed by the laws, was what many of the philoſophers countenanced, both by their maxims and by their practice. Plato himſelf is accuſed of it by ſeveral authors (*l*); but though his manner of expreſſing himſelf in ſome of his works can ſcarce be excuſed, and he might poſſibly have fallen into ſome exceſſes of this kind in his younger years, it is certain that he has ſtrongly declared againſt it, in his eighth book of laws, as being contrary to nature, and which ought by no means to be permitted. Plutarch, though he repreſents it as commonly practiſed and pleaded for, ſpeaks of it with deteſtation, in the perſon of one of his dialogiſts, in his Amatorius. Yet there were others of the philoſophers, great pretenders to reaſon and virtue, who judged very differently concerning it. Sextus Empiricus tells us, that the Cynics, and the chiefs of the Stoic ſect, looked upon it to be an indifferent thing (*m*). How much the philoſophers were ſuſpected and blamed on this account, appears from Plutarch's treatiſe De liberis educandis, where it is intimated, that many parents, who were concerned for the reputation of their

(*k*) Canon. Chronic. ſeeul. ix. p. 172.

(*l*) See Dr. Davis's note on Tuſcul. Diſput. lib. iv. cap. 34. p. 329.

(*m*) Pyrrhon. Hypotyp. lib. iii. cap. 24.

ſons,

ſons, would not ſuffer them to keep company with the philoſophers, who profeſſed love to them (*n*). He ſeems, indeed, to think, that thoſe parents were too auſtere and ſcrupulous; and produces the examples of Socrates, Plato, Xenophon, Æſchines, Cebes, and others, who profeſſed love to young gentlemen, with a view to train them up to virtue, and make them uſeful to their country: yet he declares himſelf to be in doubt, and at a loſs what to determine in this matter, and at laſt concludes with ſaying, that it is proper for parents not to ſuffer thoſe to come near their ſons, who make bodily beauty the object of their deſire, but to admit and approve thoſe who are lovers of the ſoul (*o*). So infamous

(*n*) I ſhall here ſubjoin part of a marginal note of the learned Dr. Ford, in his Engliſh tranſlation of that treatiſe of Plutarch. After having declared his willingneſs to believe, that the philoſophers whom Plutarch mentions, and who were the ſtricteſt obſervers of morality among the Heathens, "had good intentions in the "love they made to boys; yet (he thinks) Plutarch was too ſevere in his cenſure "of the parents, who were in this point cautious of their ſons reputation, conſi- "dering how infamous this converſation was, even among the Græcians; and "how ill Alcibiades was reputed of for his love to Socrates, and even Socrates "himſelf for his ſake. And the choice of the moſt beautiful children by the phi- "loſophers for their courtſhip, and the rivalries they encountered, together with "the expreſſions of dalliance which they uſed to them, nothing different from "thoſe which ordinarily are beſtowed by woers on the other ſex, gave too much "occaſion for the wits of thoſe times to expoſe them, as juſtly ſuſpected of the "fouleſt of vices: who, under whatever pretence of love to their ſouls, and deſign "to ingratiate their philoſophical counſels the better to them thereby, thus kept "them company: and that it was certainly, were they otherwiſe never ſo innocent, "a great ſcandal on their parts given to others that made an ill uſe of their "examples." This is a judicious and moderate cenſure. Some very amorous and paſſionate expreſſions of Socates himſelf are mentioned by Maximus Tyrius, in the apology he makes for him, which cannot be excuſed from great indecency.

(*o*) Cicero ridicules the Stoics pretence of loving a beautiful boy from a principle of friendſhip; and aſks, "What is that love of friendſhip? How comes it, that "none of them is in love, either with an ugly young man, or a handſome old "one?" Tuſcul. Diſput. lib. iv. cap. 33, 34.

were many of thoſe who called themſelves philoſophers for this vice, that "Socratici Cinædi" became a proverb. Lucian, in his Ερωτες, in the perſon of one of his dialogiſts, rallies the philoſophers for pretending to be in love with the ſouls, when it was really the bodily beauty they were fond of. And when he himſelf paſſes a judgment upon the diſpute, he ſays, that "marriage belongs to all, but pæderaſty ſhould be left to the philoſophers."—Παιδεραστεῖν ἀφειδῶ μόνις φιλοσόφοις. Lucian. Opera, tom. I. p. 890, 891. 901. edit. Amſt. Origen, after having obſerved that we may find purity, gravity, and ſimplicity of manners among illiterate Chriſtians, of which thoſe are not partakers who call themſelves wiſe men and philoſophers, repreſents theſe latter in ſtrong terms, as indulging the moſt unnatural filthineſs, and applies to them the words of St. Paul, Rom. i. 27 (*p*).

But not to inſiſt longer upon vices ſhocking to human nature, which yet paſſed among many of the philoſophers for matters of indifferency, there were other inſtances of impurity countenanced by them, which, though not ſo unnatural, yet are not conſiſtent with the ſtrictneſs and dignity of virtue.

None of the philoſophers was more admired than the divine Plato, as he was uſually called, and who, Cicero ſays, was a kind of God among the philoſophers: and yet his doctrine in the fifth book of his Republic, where he propoſes to give a perfect model of a well-ordered commonwealth, is ſuch as can ſcarce be recon-

(*p*) Origen cont. Celſ. lib. vii. p. 365.

ciled

ciled to the rules of common modeſty and decency. He would have the women appear naked, as well as the men, at the public exerciſes, and apologizes for it, under pretence that they will be cloathed with virtue inſtead of garments (*q*). In the ſame book he appoints the community of women in his commonwealth (*r*): that the wives of thoſe whom he calls φυλακες, the guardians of the city and commonwealth, ſhould be common to them all, and that the children ſhould be ſo too; ſo that the father ſhould not know his ſon, nor the ſon his father; but all ſhould be the children of the commonwealth. He farther propoſes, that thoſe young men who had diſtinguiſhed themſelves in war, or were eminent in other reſpects, ſhould be rewarded, by allowing them a larger liberty of accompanying with the women; that more children might be had from them for the commonwealth than from others (*s*). And again, he would have the man that was remarkable for his bravery, to be allowed, upon a military expedition, to kiſs whomſoever he pleaſed, and that it ſhould not be permitted to any one

(*q*) Plato de Republ. lib. v. Oper. p. 459. edit. Lugd. 1590.

(*r*) There have been ſeveral nations, among whom a community of wives was allowed. This is ſaid to have been the cuſtom of the Troglodytes, Agathyrſi, the Maſſagetæ, and Scythians, of whom Strabo ſaith they had their wives in common, agreeably to the laws of Plato. Geograph. lib. vii. p. 461. A. edit. Amſt.

Puffendorf has given a long liſt of other nations, which have the ſame cuſtom among them, ſuch as the antient inhabitants of Britain, the Sabeans, thoſe of the kingdom of Calecut, the antient Lithuanians, &c. See Puffend. de Jure Nat. et Gent. lib. vi. cap. 1. ſect. 15. where he proves very well that this is contrary to the law of nature. And it is a remarkable inſtance to ſhew, that men are apt to paſs wrong judgments even in things which are really founded in nature and reaſon.

(*s*) Plato Republ. lib. v. Oper. p. 460. edit. Lugd.

to refuſe him; and that if he happened to be in love with any perſon, whether male or female, it ſhould make him more eager by his courageous exploits, to obtain the rewards of his valour (*t*). There is another paſſage in the ſame book, which I had occaſion to hint at before, and which admits of no excuſe, that when men and women have paſſed the age which he aſſigns to them as fit for the begetting and conceiving ſtrong and healthy children for the commonwealth, which, according to him, is the age of forty for the women, and fifty-five for the men, they ſhould be at liberty (both men and women) to accompany with whom they pleaſed, only excepting their parents and children, or thoſe in a direct line above or below either of theſe. And if it ſhould happen that any child ſhould be begotten, care ſhould be taken, either to prevent its coming to the birth, or to expoſe it afterwards without nourithment (*u*). I am ſorry that I am obliged to mention theſe and other things of the like kind, which may ſhock the delicacy of the reader; but the ſubject I am upon makes it neceſſary to take notice of them, as they furniſh ſtriking inſtances, that men of the greateſt abilities and genius, when left to themſelves, may fall into the moſt groſs miſtakes in matters of great importance in morals. For who might ſeem more to be depended on than Plato, whoſe writings have been admired in all ages by the beſt judges, as containing ſome of the nobleſt efforts of human genius, and who is particularly celebrated for his moral ſentiments, which, in many reſpects, were undoubtedly very juſt as well as ſublime. This

(*t*) Plato Republ. lib. v. Oper. p. 464. edit. Lugd.

(*u*) Ibid. p. 461. B, C.

great

great man has obſerved in this fifth book of his Republic, from whence I have extracted the paſſages here referred to, that " except philoſophers were to have the rule over cities and kingdoms, or kings and rulers were to be well inſtructed in philoſophy, and both united in one, and not ſeparated as now, neither cities nor human kind would have any reſt from evil (*x*)." But I believe it will be allowed, that Plato has given a ſpecimen in this book, that if philoſophers were to have the making of laws and the government of cities and kingdoms committed to them, they might make very wrong regulations with regard to the morals of their ſubjects.

The Cynics were a ſect of philoſophers, who profeſſed to make morals their entire ſtudy, and to govern themſelves by the pure ſimple dictates of nature and right reaſon, without any regard to popular opinions and cuſtoms, and accordingly they are highly praiſed by Epictetus and others. But though they gave excellent precepts, and examples too, of equanimity, patience, contentment, and a contempt of worldly riches and honours, the uſual objects of ambition and avarice, they allowed themſelves great liberties in the gratification of their ſenſual paſſions. Diogenes was one of the moſt celebrated among them; for whom Epictetus frequently profeſſes the greateſt eſteem, propoſing him, as well as Socrates, as a model and pattern of virtue, and eſpecially of a great mind, ſuperior to the honours, riches, and pleaſures of the world (*y*). He

(*x*) Plato Republ. lib. v. Oper. p. 466. E. edit. Lugd.

(*y*) Epict. Diſſert. book i. chap. 24. ſect. 1. and book ii. chap. 16. ſect. 3.

employs

employs a whole large chapter in deſcribing the true Cynic, of whom he ſpeaks with the higheſt admiration; and particularly he there celebrates Diogenes, as ſent by Jupiter to men to inſtruct them concerning good and evil (*z*). And he elſewhere calls him the miniſter of Jove, and the divine Diogenes (*a*). This ſhews, that ſome of the beſt of the Heathens, for ſuch undoubtedly Epictetus was, laid no great ſtreſs on chaſtity and purity, as a neceſſary ingredient in the character of a man of virtue. Diogenes never married, for which he ſeems to be commended by Epictetus; but he found other ways of gratifying his concupiſcence, which he did without any regard to modeſty or ſhame. Some of his baſe acts of filthineſs, committed in public, were approved by the famous Stoic Chryſippus, as Plutarch informs us (*b*). And Laertius ſays, that Diogenes held, " that women ought to be " common, looking upon marriage to be nothing, and that " every man and woman might keep company with thoſe they " liked beſt, and that therefore the children ought to be in " common (*c*)."

The cuſtom of lending their wives, which was common at Sparta, and authorized by the laws of Lycurgus, is not condemned, but ſeems rather to be approved by that eminent philo-

(*z*) Epict. Diſſert. book iii. chap. 22.

(*a*) Ibid. chap. 24. ſect. 3, 4. and Enchirid. chap. 15.

(*b*) De Stoic. Repugn. Oper. tom. II. p. 1044. B.

(*c*) Laert. lib. vi. ſegm. 72.

ſopher

ſopher Plutarch, in his life of Lycurgus (*d*). And he gives a remarkable inſtance of it among the Romans, in his life of Cato of Utica. That rigid Stoic, who was accounted a perfect model of virtue, lent his wife to the orator Hortenſius. This was agreeable to the doctrine of the Stoics, who held, according to Laertius, that women ought to be common among the wiſe; for which he cites Zeno and Chryſippus.

As to fornication, it was generally allowed among the Heathens. And I do not find that any of the philoſophers abſolutely condemned it, provided it was done in a legal way. Plato, in his eighth book of laws, orders that no man ſhould preſume to touch noble or free women, except his own wife; but he does not forbid them to accompany with other women, provided they were ſuch as they had bought, or acquired in any other lawful way (*e*). Solon made a ſevere law againſt adultery; but allowed proſtitutes to go openly to thoſe that hired them (*f*). And Demoſthenes ſpeaks of it openly, and without ſcruple, as what was daily prac-

(*d*) This is not diſapproved by ſome of our modern ſceptics. Mr. Bayle, in his Nouvelles Lettres contre Maimbourg, lettre 17. maintains, that if we only conſult reaſon as ſeparated from grace, and the light of divine faith, a man would make no more difficulty of lending his wife, than of lending a book; and that were it not for the ridiculous fear of cuckoldom, reaſon would rather adviſe the community than the propriety of wives. This is well anſwered and expoſed by Mr. Barbeyrac, in his notes on Puffendorf's Le Droit de la Nature et des Gens, livre vi. chap. 1. ſect. 15.

(*e*) Plato Opera, p. 646, 647.

(*f*) See Plutarch, in his Life of Solon.

tiſed,

tiſed, and univerſally allowed among the Greeks (*g*). The philoſophers took as great liberties this way as any others, without being at all aſhamed of it, or thinking they had done a wrong thing. Epictetus praiſes Socrates and Diogenes, in oppoſition to thoſe who corrupt and intice women. But if they did not corrupt other men's wives, which, it is ſaid, Socrates never did, yet it is well known, that Diogenes did not ſcruple the making uſe of common women. The ſame thing is affirmed of Socrates by Porphyry, in his third book of the Lives of the Philoſophers, who produces the teſtimony of Ariſtoxenus, a celebrated antient author; which teſtimony is alſo referred to by Cyril Alexandrinus (*h*) and Theodoret (*i*). Socrates the eccleſiaſtical hiſtorian has cenſured Porphyry on this account; but Holſtenius has vindicated Porphyry againſt that cenſure, in his book De Vitâ et Scriptis Porphyrii, p. 41. 43. at the end of the Cambridge edition of Porphyr. de Abſtinentiâ, 1655.

It is true, that ſome of the Heathens were ſenſible that there was a turpitude in women's proſtituting themſelves; or, as Alpian expreſſeth it, "Meretrices turpiter facere quòd meretrices eſſent."--"That harlots acted baſely in being harlots." And that there was a probrum or infamy in ſuch a conduct.—"Probrum intelli-"gitur etiam in his mulieribus eſſe, quæ turpiter viverent, vulgo-"que quæſtum facerent, etiamſi non palam." And in ſome

(*g*) Orat. cont. Neæram, ap. Athen. Deipnoſ. p. 573.

(*h*) Cyril. Alex. cont. Julian. lib. vi.

(*i*) Theodoret. Therap. ſerm. 1. as alſo ſerm. 4 et 12.

nations they had public notes of diſgrace put upon them, and were not ſuffered to enter into their temples. Tacitus, ſpeaking of Veſtilia, a Roman lady of a noble family, who before the ædiles publiſhed herſelf a proſtitute, obſerves, that the antient Romans thought that theſe women were ſufficiently puniſhed by their very avowing their own infamy. " Satis pœnarum ad-" verſùs impudicas in ipſa profeſſione flagitii credebatur (*k*)." One ſhould have thought, therefore, that they muſt have acknowledged that the indulging meretricious loves is contrary to that purity and decency which becomes the rational nature, as diſtinguiſhed from the brutal kind: and that if there is a turpitude in women's proſtituting themſelves, there muſt be alſo in men's making uſe of proſtitutes, and thereby encouraging ſuch proſtitutions. And yet it does not appear that this was regarded among the men as a crime. It has been obſerved, how univerſal this was among the Greeks. And as to the Romans, the ſaying of Cato to a young gentleman, whom he ſaw coming out of a brothel, is well known, in which he encouraged young men to that practice, provided they took care not to abuſe other men's wives (*l*). And the famous paſſage of Cicero, in his oration for M. Cælius, is ſtill more remarkable, in which he openly declares before a public aſſembly of the Roman people, " That to find fault with mere-" tricious amours was an extraordinary ſeverity, abhorrent not " only from the licentiouſneſs of that age, but from the cuſtoms " and conſtitutions of their anceſtors." And he aſks, " When

(*k*) Tacit. Annal. lib. ii. cap. 85.

(*l*) Horat. Sat. lib. i. ſat. 2. ver. 31. et ſeq.

" was this not done? When was it found fault with? When " was it not allowed? Can the time be named when this prac- " tice, which is now lawful, was not accounted ſo?—Quando " enim hoc factum non eſt? Quando reprehenſum? Quando " non permiſſum? Quando denique fuit, ut quod licet, non " liceret (*m*)?" Indeed, after Chriſtianity had made ſome progreſs, ſome of the Pagans declared poſitively againſt it. Grotius has produced ſome remarkable teſtimonies to this purpoſe, particularly from Dion, Chryſoſtomus, Muſonius, and Porphyry (*n*). But the generality of the philoſophers ſeem not to have regarded it as a ſin. Origen hath the philoſophers of his time particularly in view, when he ſpeaks of thoſe, who, like the vulgar, wallowed in the luſts of uncleanneſs and laſciviouſneſs, and went promiſcuouſly to brothels, teaching that in this there was nothing contrary to decency and good morals. Διδάσκοντες μὴ πάντως παρὰ τὸ καθῆκον τοῦτο γενέσθαι (*o*). The Stoics, who were the moſt famous teachers of morals in the Pagan world, yet carried it ſo far as to maintain, that it is not abſurd or unreaſonable to cohabit with a harlot, τῇ ἑταίρᾳ συνοικεῖν, or to get a livelihood by ſuch practices, as Sextus Empiricus informs us (*p*). The Evangelical Precept, therefore, which forbids fornication as a ſin, and contrary to the Divine Law, is not without reaſon produced by ſome judicious authors as an inſtance of a moral precept not to be found in

(*m*) Orat. pro M. Cælio, cap. 20.

(*n*) Grot. in Matt. v. 27.

(*o*) Orig. cont. Celſ. lib. iv. p. 177. edit. Spenſer.

(*p*) Pyrrhon. Hypotyp. lib. iii. cap. 24.

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the writings of the antient Pagan philoſophers. The learned Dr. Sykes, indeed, will not allow this. But all that he offers to the contrary only ſhews, that it was looked upon as having a turpitude in it for women to proſtitute themſelves (*q*): but he has produced no teſtimony to prove that it was accounted a ſin in the men to make uſe of ſuch proſtitutes; or that the philoſophers, before the coming of our Saviour, prohibited or condemned it as a vicious practice, and contrary to good morals, except when it was carried to an exceſs. It is not, therefore, ſo much to be wondered at, that all manner of impurity abounded ſo much in the Pagan world, ſince even their wiſeſt men were ſo looſe in their notions as well as in their practice. To convince men of the evil of that impurity which ſo greatly prevailed, was one noble deſign of the Goſpel, as St. Paul ſignifies to the Chriſtian converts, in that excellent paſſage, 1 Theſſ. iv. 3, 4, 5. "This is "the will of God, even your ſanctification, that ye ſhould ab- "ſtain from fornication: that every one of you ſhould poſſeſs his "veſſel in ſanctification and honour, not in the luſt of concu- "piſcence, even as the Gentiles which know not God."

Several learned writers on the law of nature, and among others Puffendorf, have produced good arguments to prove, that the conjunction of men and women out of marriage, and a vague and licentious commerce between the ſexes, is contrary to the law of nature and reaſon. There is alſo a remarkable paſſage to the

(*q*) Dr. Sykes's Principles and Connection of Natural and Revealed Religion, p. 412.

ſame purpoſe, from M. de Monteſquieu, which the reader may find above, p. 51 (*r*). To which may be added another paſſage from the ſame celebrated author, where he obſerves, That " there " are ſo many evils attending the loſs of virtue in a woman, the " whole ſoul is ſo degraded by it, and ſo many other faults follow " upon it, that in a popular ſtate public incontinence may be re- " garded as the greateſt of misfortunes, and a ſure prognoſtic of " a change in the conſtitution (*s*)." And yet if this matter had been left merely to the judgment of philoſophers, there was no likelihood of their determining the point: and there was great need of an expreſs Divine Law and Authority, to aſcertain our duty in this reſpect, and enforce it upon us by the moſt powerful ſanctions.

From the inſtances which have been produced it ſufficiently appears, that as to that part of moral duty which relates to the government of the ſenſual appetites and paſſions, the philoſophers, even thoſe of them that ſaid the nobleſt things concerning virtue in general, and the neceſſity of keeping the fleſhly appetite in a due ſubjection to reaſon, were greatly deficient, and not to be depended upon as proper guides to mankind. The ſame may be obſerved concerning thoſe among the moderns, who ſhew the greateſt zeal for the abſolute clearneſs and ſufficiency of the law of nature, independent of all Divine Revelation. It is to be feared, that if left merely to themſelves, and to what they would call the dictates of

(*r*) See L'Eſprit des Loix, Vol. I. livre xvi. chap. 12.

(*s*) Ibid. livre vii. chap. 8. See alſo Vol. II. livre xxiii. chap. 2.

nature

nature and reaſon, they would prove very looſe interpreters of that law, in that part of it which relates to the reſtraining and governing the carnal appetites. Some of them, in the accounts they give of natural religion and law, make it to conſiſt in worſhipping God, and being juſt to men, and loving one's country; but ſcarce take any notice at all of temperance and purity (*t*): or at leaſt they allow much greater indulgence in this reſpect, than is conſiſtent with that purity of heart and life which Chriſtianity requires. Dr. Tindal ſeems to lay no other reſtraint on the fleſhly concupiſcence, than that it be gratified in ſuch a manner, that the ſpecies may be propagated, and the happineſs of the perſons promoted: and of this, according to his ſcheme, every man muſt be a judge for himſelf, according to the circumſtances he is in (*u*). Lord Bolingbroke has no great notion of the virtue or obligation of chaſtity, which he reſolves into a vanity inherent in our nature of appearing to be ſuperior to other animals. He ſays, That "the ſhame of modeſty is artificial, and has been inſpired "by human laws, by prejudice, and the like cauſes: and thinks "the law of nature does not forbid inceſt, except it be perhaps "that of the higheſt kind." He concludes, that "Increaſe and "multiply is the law of nature. The manner in which this

(*t*) This ſeems to be the ſcheme of the famous M. De Voltaire, in his poem on Natural Religion. See Abbé Gauchet's Lettres Critiques, tome IV. lettre 37. And, indeed, if we may judge from many paſſages in the works of that very ingenious author, chaſtity and purity, and the exerciſing a due government over the ſenſual paſſions, does not ſeem to make a neceſſary part of his ſcheme of religion and morals.

(*u*) See Anſwer to Chriſtianity as old as the Creation, Vol. I. p. 203. 2d edit.

"practice

" practice ſhall be executed with the greateſt advantage to ſociety, " is the law of man (*x*)." Here this matter is left wholly to political conſiderations and human laws, without any Divine law to reſtrain or regulate it. And what ſcandalous liberties this way have been countenanced and encouraged by the laws of many nations, I have before had occaſion to ſhew. The author of the famous book De l'Eſprit has given a large account of them, and ſeems himſelf to be for allowing an almoſt boundleſs indulgence to the fleſhly concupiſcence. And it may be obſerved concerning many of the foreign writers, who profeſs to be admirers of Natural Religion, and are thought to be no friends to Revelation, that they have written in a very looſe manner: they abound in laſcivious anecdotes, and ſtories of gallantry; and paint impure ſcenes and pleaſures in a very alluring ſtyle, at the ſame time intermixing ſtrokes againſt Religion. But ſurely authors who are ſo looſe in their writings are not very proper to be guides in matters of religion and morality. It looks a little odd, that men who ſet up for delivering mankind from ſuperſtition, and leading them in the paths of reaſon and virtue, ſhould, inſtead of endeavouring to correct and reſtrain the prevailing licentiouſneſs of manners, open a wide door to libertiniſm and impurity.

(*x*) Bolingbroke's Works, Vol. V. p. 172. et ſeq. edit. 4to.

CHAP.

CHAP. IX.

The Stoics the moſt eminent teachers of morals in the Pagan world. Mightily admired and extolled both by antients and moderns. Obſervations on the Stoical maxims and precepts with regard to piety towards God. Their ſcheme tended to take away, or very much weaken, the fear of God as a puniſher of ſin. It tended alſo to raiſe men to a ſtate of ſelf-ſufficiency and independency, inconſiſtent with a due veneration for the Supreme Being. Extravagant ſtrains of pride and arrogance in ſome of the principal Stoics. Confeſſion of ſin in their addreſſes to the Deity made no part of their religion.

IF the people had been to depend upon any one ſect of philoſophers, for leading them into right notions of moral duty, the Stoics ſeem to have bid the faireſt for it, as they made the higheſt pretences to a pure and ſublime morality. Many admirable precepts and moral inſtructions are to be found in their writings, and the main principle which lay at the foundation of their whole ſyſtem was this, that virtue is the chief, the only good.

A celebrated author, M. De Monteſquieu, expreſſes his admiration of the Stoics in very high terms. He ſays, that " of all " the ſects of philoſophers among the antients, there was none " whoſe principles were more worthy of man, or better fitted to

" make men good, than that of the Stoics: and that if he could " abſtract a moment from the conſideration of his being a Chri- " ſtian, he could not help regarding the extinction of the ſect of " Zeno as a misfortune to the human race: that if it were " chargeable with carrying things too far, it was only with re- " ſpect to thoſe things which had a certain grandeur in them, " the contempt of pleaſures and of pain: that whilſt they re- " garded riches and honours, pains and pleaſures, as vain things, " they were wholly employed in labouring for the happineſs of " mankind, and in exerciſing the duties of ſociety, for the good " of which they looked upon themſelves to be born and deſtined: " and this without looking for any other rewards than what " were within themſelves; as if being happy in their philoſophy " alone, nothing but the happineſs of others was capable of aug- " menting their own." I would obſerve by the way, that this ingenious writer ſeems here not to be quite exact. For, according to the Stoic principles, the happineſs of a wiſe man is complete in himſelf, abſolutely independent on that of others, and incapable of receiving any addition from it. This excellent author adds, that " it looked as if the Stoics regarded that ſacred ſpirit, which " they believed to be in them, as a kind of favourable provi- " dence, which watched over the human race." And that " this ſect alone knew how to make good citizens, great men, " and good emperors (*y*)."

(*y*) L'Eſprit des Loix, Vol. II. liv. xxiv. chap. 10. p. 157, 158. edit. Edinb.

There

There is alſo a fine encomium on the principles of the Stoic philoſophy, in the learned Gataker's Præloquium or Preliminary Diſcourſe prefixed to his excellent tranſlation and commentary on Antoninus's Meditations. He there gives a ſummary of the Stoical maxims and principles, both with reſpect to the duties of piety towards God, and thoſe we owe to man, or the ſocial duties and affections (z). The paſſages he produces to this purpoſe are almoſt all taken from Epictetus and Antoninus: both of whom lived after Chriſtianity had made ſome progreſs, and had ſpread among many of the people the knowledge of God, and of a pure morality. Theſe two excellent philoſophers ſeem to have carried the doctrine of morals to a greater degree of perfection than any of the more antient Stoics. And any one that would form a judgment of the Stoical ſyſtem, merely from the ſummary which that learned man gives out of their writings, muſt needs have a very advantageous notion of it, as having a near affinity to the rules laid down in the Goſpel. I am far from denying to the Stoics their juſt praiſes. But, in order to our forming a right and impartial judgment, it is proper to take their whole ſyſtem together, and not the fair ſide of it only. Several inſtances may be mentioned, ſome of them of conſiderable importance, in which they were defective, others in which they carried things to an extreme. From whence it will appear, that the Stoical doctrines and precepts were not ſufficient guides to mankind, nor exhibited

(z) The reader may ſee this part of Gataker's Preliminary Diſcourſe tranſlated, with the references to the ſeveral paſſages, and ſome additional notes, at the end of the Glaſgow tranſlation of Antoninus's Meditations.

a complete rule of moral duty, and conſequently, furniſh no juſt objection againſt the uſefulneſs and neceſſity of the Chriſtian Revelation.

I ſhall begin with ſome obſervations on the Stoical doctrines and precepts with regard to the duties of piety towards God. This is, by their own acknowledgment, the nobleſt and moſt important part our duty. That great philoſopher and emperor Marcus Antoninus adviſes " to do every thing, even the moſt " minute, as mindful of the connection there is between divine " and human things. For (ſays he) you will neither rightly " diſcharge any duty to man without a due regard to divine " things, nor, on the other hand, any duty to God without a " regard to human things (*a*)." And again he declares, That " the ſoul is formed for holineſs and piety towards God, no leſs " than for juſtice towards men." And he adds, that " theſe are " rather more venerable than acts of human juſtice." Μᾶλλον γ' σεβύτερα τῶν δικαιοπραγμάτων (*b*).

One great defect which runs through their nobleſt precepts of piety, is, that the duties they preſcribe of devotion, ſubmiſſion, abſolute reſignation, truſt and dependence, prayer, praiſe and thankſgiving, are promiſcuouſly rendered to God and to the gods. There are many paſſages in the writings of the Stoics, which would deſerve the higheſt praiſe, if underſtood of the duty we

(*a*) Anton. Medit. book iii. ſect. 13.

(*b*) Ibid. book xi. ſect. 20.

owe

owe to the one true God; but there are numerous other paſſages in which they preſcribe the ſame duties to a multiplicity of deities. Zeno defines piety to be "the knowledge of the worſhip of the "gods." He taught, that "wiſe men are pious and religious, "and underſtand the rites relating to the gods: that they ſacrifice "to the gods, and are acceptable to them, and that they alone "are prieſts (*c*)." Thus their precepts of piety are ſo managed as to uphold the people in their polytheiſm. This holds true, even of Epictetus and Antoninus; for a diſtinct proof of which I refer the reader to the former volume of this work, in the latter part of the fourteenth chapter; and it muſt be obſerved, that thoſe which are eminent acts of piety, when rendered to the one true God, are very culpable acts of idolatry, when directed to falſe and fictitious deities.

An eſſential part of religion, and upon which a great ſtreſs is laid in the Holy Scriptures, is the fear of God. This is a diſpoſition becoming reaſonable creatures towards the Supreme Being, and which his infinite perfections, his juſtice and purity, and ſovereign dominion, juſtly demand from us. But with regard to this, the Stoics ſeem to have been greatly deficient. I do not deny, that they preſcribed a fear of reverence or veneration. Αἰδεῖσθαι θεούς, "reverence the gods," was one of their precepts, and is urged by Antoninus. But there is a fear of God as the juſt puniſher of vice and wickedneſs, which is alſo of great importance in religion in the preſent ſtate of mankind, and this had properly

(*c*) Diog. Laert. lib. vii. ſegm. 119.

no place in the Stoical ſyſtem. Zeno makes it one of the requiſites to happineſs, not to fear the gods. And perfect liberty and tranquillity of mind, according to Seneca, conſiſts in neither fearing the gods nor men, and in a man's having an abſolute power over himſelf. " Quæris quæ ſit iſta? [tranquillitas animi et ab- " ſoluta libertas]" He anſwers, " Non homines timere non " deos: in ſeipſum habere maximam poteſtatem: ineſtimabile " bonum eſt ſuum fieri (*d*)." And indeed, according to their ſcheme of principles, and the idea they give of a wiſe man, it is not in the power of God to hurt him, or to hinder his being completely happy. For as to what are accounted external evils and bodily pains, they are really no evils at all, and the wiſe man can enjoy himſelf, and be perfectly happy in the ſevereſt torments: and as to his mind, he can wrap himſelf up in his own virtue, which is ſelf-ſufficient and independent: ſo that it may be ſaid, not only that God will not, but that he cannot do any thing to render him unhappy (*e*).

To which it may be added, that the Stoics advanced ſuch a notion of the Divine Goodneſs, as tended to free men in a great

(*d*) See at the end of his 75th epiſtle.

(*e*) The Stoics, through an affectation of greatneſs of mind, deſtroyed, as far as in them lay, the influence of fear in mortals, by taking away the fear of the gods, of pain, ſickneſs, diſgrace, and death, which tends to ſubvert one of the main principles of government, both human and divine. Any one that has made due reflections on the ſtate of the world, and on human nature, muſt be ſenſible that the paſſion of fear is implanted in the heart of man for very wiſe ends, and, if properly made uſe of, may anſwer very important purpoſes. It ſeems evident, that this is one way by which the Author of Nature deſigned mankind ſhould be governed; and that it is this which gives force to the ſanctions of law, and without which they would have ſmall effect.

meaſure

meaſure from the fear of God, and was ſcarce conſiſtent with punitive juſtice. Antoninus declares, ſpeaking of the Intelligence which governs the univerſe, that no man is hurt by it (*f*). I do not remember that he ever ſpeaks of God's being angry with bad men for their wickedneſs: nor indeed can I well ſee what room there is for it upon his ſcheme. Some of the reaſons which are urged by him and Epictetus, and which I ſhall particularly conſider afterwards, to ſhew that good men ſhould not be angry at the wickedneſs of others, would equally prove, if they were juſt and well founded, that God ſhould not be ſo. And accordingly, never do Epictetus or Antoninus, as far as I remember, give any intimation of God's calling men to an account, and puniſhing them for their ſins. Antoninus ſays, That " the gods in a long " eternity muſt always bear with a numerous wicked world (*g*)." The Stoics, indeed, acknowledged an imperial head of the univerſe, and maintained that the world was governed by laws: but they allowed no proper ſanctions of rewards and puniſhments to enforce obedience to thoſe laws, but ſuch as neceſſarily flow from the nature of the actions themſelves. They affirmed, that their own virtues were the only rewards of the good and virtuous, and their own vices the only puniſhments of the wicked. There are many paſſages of Epictetus to this purpoſe (*b*). So Seneca ſays, that the greateſt puniſhment of an injury that is done, is the

(*f*) Anton. Medit. book vi. ſect. 1.

(*g*) Ibid. book vii. ſect. 70.

(*b*) The reader may conſult his Diſſertations, book i. chap. 12. ſect. 2. book iii. chap. 7. at the end. And ibid. chap. 24. ſect. 2. and book iv. chap. 9. ſect. 2.

having

having done it. " Maxima eſt injuriæ factæ pœna, feciſſe: nec " quiſquam gravius afficitur, quàm qui ad ſupplicium pœnitentiæ " traditur (*i*)." This ſeems to be a noble way of talking, and to argue high notions of the intrinſic excellency of virtue, and the evil and deformity of vice and ſin. But if this were all the puniſhment wicked men were to expect, to be left to their own reflections, and to the natural conſequences of their own actions, without any farther puniſhment to be inflicted upon them by a governing authority, it would be of the moſt pernicious conſequence to the peace and order of the moral world. No human government could ſubſiſt upon this foot: and if no other puniſhment were to be expected from God, it would go a great way to baniſh the fear of God from among men. Plutarch obſerves, that the famous Stoic Chryſippus, in his books againſt Plato, concerning juſtice, ſays, that " Cephalus did not rightly deter men " from injuſtice by the fear of the gods; and that many things " may be probably offered to the contrary, impugning the diſ- " courſe concerning divine puniſhments, as nothing different from " the tales of Akko and Alphito, which women are wont to " frighten children withal." Yet Plutarch adds, as an inſtance of the Stoical contradictions, that Chryſippus elſewhere ſpeaks of the gods as ſending puniſhments, that, admoniſhed by theſe examples, men may not dare to attempt the doing wicked things (*k*).

(*i*) Sen. de Irâ, lib. iii. cap. 26.

(*k*) De Stoic. Repugn. Oper. tom. II. p. 1043. edit. Xyl.

It

It is a noted ſaying of Seneca, that " no man in his ſound rea-
" ſon fears the gods: for it is a weakneſs to be afraid of the
" things which are ſalutary."—" Deos nemo ſanus timet: furor
" eſt enim metuere ſalutaria (*l*)." And again, he repreſents the gods as of a mild and gentle nature, " having it neither in their
" inclination, nor in their power, to hurt any one; and that they
" have no power but what is beneficent and ſalutary"—" Quæ-
" dam ſunt quæ nocere non poſſunt, nullamque vim niſi benefi-
" cam et ſalutarem habent: ut dii immortales, qui nec volunt
" obeſſe, nec poſſunt. Natura enim illis mitis et placida eſt,
" tam longè remota ab alienâ injuriâ quam à ſuâ (*m*)." He expreſſes himſelf to the ſame purpoſe in another place. " Errat,
" ſiquis putat illos nocere velle; non poſſunt: nec accipere inju-
" riam queunt, nec facere." i. e. " He errs, who thinks the
" gods are willing to hurt any man; they cannot do it: they can
" neither do nor ſuffer any hurt or injury." And yet he there talks of their ſending chaſtiſements, to correct and reſtrain ſome perſons, and putting on a ſhew of puniſhing them (*n*).

I think, upon the whole, it may be juſtly ſaid, that the doctrine of the Stoics tended to take away, or at leaſt very much to weaken and diminiſh, the fear of God as a puniſher of ſin. Such a fear was frequently repreſented by them as baſe and ſuperſtitious. And yet ſome fear of this kind ſeems to be a neceſſary

(*l*) Sen. de Benefic. lib. iv. cap. 19.

(*n*) Sen. de Irâ, lib. ii. cap. 27.

(*m*) Sen. epiſt. 95.

and

and moſt uſeful part of the religion of ſinful creatures, and is one of the moſt powerful preſervatives againſt ſin and wickedneſs. Accordingly, it is what our Saviour moſt expreſly preſcribes, at the ſame time that he directs his diſciples not to be afraid of the power or diſpleaſure of the greateſt man upon earth, Luke xii. 4, 5.

There is another part of the Stoical ſyſtem, which is not very conſiſtent with that profound veneration for the Supreme Being, and that humble ſenſe of our entire dependence upon him, which is a neceſſary branch of true piety. They propoſed to raiſe men to a ſtate of abſolute independency, and they thereby put them upon affecting a kind of equality with God himſelf. The notion they had of making the ſouls of men effluxes and portions of the Divinity had a manifeſt tendency to cheriſh this preſumption. That this was the notion even of the beſt of the Stoics, ſuch as Epictetus and Antoninus, appears from expreſs paſſages quoted from both theſe excellent philoſophers in the former part of this work, chap. xii. To what was there obſerved, I ſhall here add one paſſage more from Epictetus. " As to the body (ſaith he), " thou art a ſmall part of the univerſe; but in reſpect of the " mind or reaſon, neither worſe nor leſs than the gods. Will " you not place your good there, where you are equal to the " gods (*o*)?"

I cannot think it becoming the veneration we owe to the Supreme Being, to aſſert, as Epictetus does, that the will of man

(*o*) Epict. Differt. book i. chap. 12. ſect. 2.

is

is unconquerable by God himſelf. In oppoſition to the threatning, "I will fetter thee," he anſwers, "What ſayeſt thou, man? "Fetter me! Thou wilt fetter my feet: but Jupiter himſelf can- "not overcome my choice;" i. e. my deliberate election or determination. Τὴν προαίρεσιν δὲ ὁ Ζεὺς νικῆσαι δύναται (*p*). He ſeems elſewhere to ſay, that it is God that hath appointed it to be ſo. "God (ſaith he) hath given us faculties, by which we "may bear every event without being depreſſed or broken by it; "but, like a good prince, and a true father, hath rendered them "incapable of reſtraint, compulſion, or hindrance, and entirely "dependent on our own pleaſure; nor hath he reſerved a power "even to himſelf, of hindering or reſtraining them (*q*)." This he afterwards explains in this manner. "If God hath conſtituted "that portion, which he hath ſeparated from his own eſſence, "and given to us, capable of being reſtrained or compelled, "either by himſelf or by any other, he would not have been God, "nor have taken care of us in a due manner (*r*)." This appears to me to be a very raſh and preſumptuous way of talking. I do not well underſtand the ſtrain of his reaſoning. But it ſeems to be this: That God hath made us, with reſpect to the freedom of our will, independent of himſelf, yea, and to have neceſſarily made us ſo; becauſe we are parts of God, which he hath ſeparated from his own eſſence; and therefore are no more to be conſtrained and compelled than he is: and that if had made us capable of being

(*p*) Epict. Differt. book i. chap. 1. ſect. 6.

(*q*) Ibid. chap. 6. ſect. 6.

(*r*) Ibid. chap. 17. ſect. 2.

compelled, either by himſelf or by any other, he would not have been God: for it would follow that he himſelf might be compelled, if we, who are portions of his eſſence, might be ſo: and conſequently he would not be God. For it is neceſſarily included in the idea of God, that he is independent, and not liable to compulſion.

Seneca, Epictetus, and Antoninus, often talk of our having a God within us, by which they underſtand the rational human ſoul. And many of the Stoics carried it to ſuch a height of arrogance, that they in effect equalled their wiſe men with God, in virtue, perfection, and happineſs. " It is a common conception con-" cerning the gods (ſaith Plutarch) that in nothing do they ſo " much excel men as in happineſs and virtue: but Chryſippus " does not allow them this prerogative." Accordingly, he produces a paſſage from that famous Stoic, in which he ſaith, That " Jupiter has no præ-eminence above Dion in virtue: but that " Jupiter and Dion, being both wiſe, are in like manner helpful " or profitable to one another." Ἀρετῇ τε οὐχ ὑπερέχειν τὸν Δία τοῦ Δίωνος, ὠφελεῖσθαί τε ὁμοίως ὑπ' ἀλλήλων τὸν Δία καὶ τὸν Δίωνα σόφους. Plutarch adds, that the Stoics ſay, that " the man who " does not come ſhort of the gods in virtue, does not come ſhort " of them in happineſs, but is equally happy with Jupiter the ſa-" viour, even then when being unfortunate becauſe of diſeaſes " and bodily torments, he puts an end to his own life, provided " he be a wiſe man (*s*)." The ſame author produces another

(*s*) Plut. de Commun. Notit. adver. Stoic. Oper. tom. II. p. 1076. A. B.

arrogant

arrogant ſaying of Chryſippus, in his third Book of Nature, That " as it is proper and becoming for Jupiter to glory in himſelf, " and in his own life, and to think and ſpeak magnificently of " himſelf, as living in a manner that deſerves to be highly ſpoken " of; ſo theſe things are becoming all good men, as being in no- " thing exceeded by Jupiter (*t*)." To this may be added another paſſage of Chryſippus, quoted by Stobæus, That " the happineſs " of good men differeth in nothing from the divine happineſs; " and that the happineſs of Jupiter is in nothing more eligible, " more beautiful, more venerable, than that of wiſe men (*u*)."

Seneca has many paſſages in the ſame ſtrain. He ſays, That " a wiſe man lives upon a parity or equality with the gods (*x*)." That " a good man differs only in time from God (*y*)." And this in the Stoical ſcheme is no great matter, ſince they held that the length of duration makes no difference as to happineſs. And accordingly he directly aſſerts, that " God does not exceed the wiſe " man in happineſs, though he does in age (*z*)." To the ſame purpoſe Cicero gives it as the ſentiment of the Stoics, that " from " virtue ariſes a happy life, like and equal to the gods, giving

(*t*) De Stoic. Repugn. Oper. tom. II. p. 1038. C. edit. Xyl.

(*u*) Stob. Eclog. Ethic. lib. ii. p. 178. edit. Plantin.

(*x*) " Sapiens cum diis ex pari vivit." Sen. epiſt. 59.

(*y*) " Bonus vir tempore tantùm à Deo differt." Idem, de Providentiâ, cap. 1.

(*z*) " Deus non vincit ſapientem in felicitate, etiamſi vincat ætate." Idem, epiſt 73.

" place to them in nothing but immortality, which does not in " the leaſt conduce to the living happily (*a*)." Seneca ſeems to mention it to the advantage of the wiſe man, that " he has the " art of crowding the whole of happineſs into a narrow com- " paſs." And he carries it ſo far as to ſay, that " there is one " thing in which the wiſe man excels God, that God is wiſe by " the benefit of nature, not by his own choice (*b*)." He mentions with approbation, ſome arrogant ſayings of Sextius. As, that " Jupiter can do no more than a good man. Jupiter indeed " has more things to beſtow upon men: but of two good per- " ſons, he is not the better who is richer.—That a wiſe man ſees " and contemns all worldly goods which others are poſſeſſed of, " with an equal mind, as well as Jupiter; and for this he values " and admires himſelf the more, that Jupiter cannot make uſe of " them, the wiſe man will not (*c*)."

Theſe are extravagant ſtrains, which cannot be excuſed from impiety, and yet are the genuine conſequences of the Stoical prin-

(*a*) " E virtutibus vita beata exiſtit, par et ſimilis deorum, nullâ re niſi immortalitate, quæ nihil ad beatè vivendum pertinet, cedens cœleſtibus." Cic. de Nat. Deor. lib. ii.

(*b*) " Mehercule magni artificis eſt clauſiſſe totum in exigno.—Eſt aliquid quo ſapiens antecedat Deum. Ille naturæ beneficio, non ſuo ſapiens eſt." Sen. ep. 53.

(*c*) " Solebat dicere Sextius, " Jovem plus non poſſe quàm bonum virum. Plura dat Jupiter quæ præſtet hominibus: ſed inter duos bonos, non eſt melior qui ditior.—Sapiens tam æquo animo omnia apud alios videt contemnitque, quam Jupiter; et hoc ſe magis ſuſpicit, quod Jupiter uti illis non poteſt, ſapiens non vult." Sen. epiſt. 73. at the latter end.

ciples,

ciples. To which may be added, their high pretenſions to ſelf-ſufficiency. " The condition and character of a philoſopher (ſays " Epictetus) is, that he expects all that might profit or hurt him " only from himſelf (*d*)." This naturally led to ſelf-confidence and ſelf-dependence. Seneca makes the confiding in a man's ſelf the only cauſe and ſupport of a happy life. " Unum bonum eſt, " quod beatæ vitæ cauſa et fundamentum eſt, ſibi fidere (*e*)." This might be ſo explained as to admit of a good ſenſe; but if we compare it with the other parts of the Stoical ſyſtem, it breathes that arrogance and ſelf-ſufficiency for which they were ſo remarkable, and which naturally flowed from their avowed principles. And accordingly Seneca himſelf, in the ſame epiſtle, repreſents it as needleſs to apply to the gods by prayer, ſince it is in a man's own power to make himſelf happy. " Turpe eſt etiamnùm deos " fatigare. Quid vocis opus eſt? Fate ipſe felicem (*f*)." And, ſpeaking of virtue and an uniform courſe of life conſiſtent with itſelf, he ſaith, " This is the chiefeſt good, which if thou poſ- " ſeſſeſt, thou wilt begin to be a companion of the gods, not a " ſupplicant to them."—" Hoc eſt ſummum bonum, quod ſi " occupas, incipis deorum eſſe ſocius, non ſupplex." And again, ſpeaking of perſevering in a good mind, he ſays, " How fooliſh " is it to wiſh or pray for it, when thou canſt give it to thyſelf? " There is no need to lift up thy hands to heaven."—" Quam " ſtultum eſt optare cum poſſis à te impetrare? Non ſunt ad

(*d*) Epict. Enchirid, chap. 43. Miſs Carter's tranſlation.

(*e*) Sen. epiſt. 31.

(*f*) Id. ibid.

" cœlum

" cœlum elevandæ manus (*g*)," &c. This was talking conſiſtently with their ſcheme, which went upon this principle, that virtue is properly and abſolutely in our own power, and that God himſelf cannot overcome our choice. But in this matter, as in ſeveral others, the Stoics were not always conſiſtent with themſelves. Seneca himſelf elſewhere gives it as his advice to his friend, in his tenth epiſtle, that he ſhould pray for a good mind and for a ſound ſtate, firſt of the ſoul, then of the body. " Roga bonam mentem, bonam valitudinem animi deinde cor-
" poris." There are ſeveral paſſages both in Epictetus and Antoninus, which recommend the praying for divine aſſiſtances in the performance of our duty. The former, ſpeaking of the combat againſt the paſſions, and appearances of things, ſaith, " Re-
" member God, invoke him for your aid and protector, as ſailors
" do Caſtor and Pollux in a ſtorm (*h*)." And Antoninus intimates, that

(*g*) Sen. epiſt. 41. It is to be obſerved, that it was a general practice among the Heathens to pray to their gods; but then the things they ordinarily prayed for, were only outward advantages, or what are uſually called the goods of fortune: as to wiſdom and virtue, they thought every man was to depend only upon himſelf for obtaining it. There is a paſſage of Cotta in Cicero's third book De Nat. Deor. which is very full to this purpoſe, and which I have produced and conſidered at large, Vol. I. chap. xvii. With this may be compared that paſſage of Horace:

" Hoc ſatis eſt orare Jovem, qui donat et auſert,
" Det vitam, det opes, æquum mi animum ipſe parabo."
Horat. Epiſt. lib. i. ep. 17.

(*h*) Epictetus here mentions God in the ſingular number, and ſo he does in ſome other paſſages. And when Chriſtian writers meet with ſuch paſſages, they immediately are for interpreting them of the one true God, the Supreme Lord of the univerſe, and of him only. But in this they are frequently miſtaken. Plato, in a paſſage I have taken notice of before, Vol. I. chap. xvii. repreſents it as the practice of every prudent man to apply to God by prayer in every undertaking: but

that we ought to pray to the gods to give us their aſſiſtance, even in things which they have put in our own power: and particularly, that we ought to pray to the gods that they would enable us to govern our deſires and fears with regard to external things. See his Meditations, book ix. ſect. 40. And both the one and the other of theſe philoſophers gives thanks to God for moral improvements. Even Seneca himſelf ſeems to ſuppoſe, that a wiſe man ought to do this: though he mentions the giving thanks in a way that has a great mixture of vain-glory in it. " Ille verò " glorietur audacter, et diis agat gratias."—" Let him boldly " glory (ſays he) and give thanks to the gods."

There is another part of religion recommended in Scripture, and which ought to accompany our prayers and acts of devotion in this preſent ſinful ſtate; and that is, the confeſſing our ſins to God, the humbling ourſelves deeply before him on the account of

but it is evident that this is there to be underſtood either of the patron god, whom he elſewhere ſuppoſes to be Apollo, or ſome other of the popular deities. Antoninus, in the paſſages I have here referred to, ſuppoſes the gods to be the authors and givers of all good things, and that to them we are to offer up our prayers for divine aſſiſtances, and our thankſgivings for the bleſſings we enjoy. And Epictetus himſelf, in his Enchiridion, ſuppoſes the adminiſtration of things in the univerſe to be in the hands of the gods, and that they order all things with the moſt perfect underſtanding, juſtice, and goodneſs. It was a maxim with the Stoics, that wiſdom cometh from the gods to men. And if the gods, or any one of them, were applied to for aſſiſtance, it would, according to the Pagan notions, have anſwered the intention of Epictetus's advice. It muſt be conſidered, that in the Stoical ſcheme, the whole animated ſyſtem of the univerſe was God, and the ſeveral parts of the univerſe were ſo many parts, members, or powers of the Divinity, to which they gave ſeveral appellations of particular gods or goddeſſes. But for a more diſtinct account of this, I muſt refer the reader to what is ſaid in the former volume, chap. xiii, xiv.

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them, and imploring the pardon of them. But this ſeems not to be a part of religion which the Stoics preſcribe. Antoninus, indeed, ſpeaks of repentance, ἡ μετάνοια, as a reprehenſion of a man's ſelf for having neglected ſomething uſeful. See his Meditations, book viii. ſect. 10. And he talks of a man's condemning himſelf for the wrong he hath done, which he compares to the tearing his own fleſh. Ibid. book xii. ſect. 16. But this ſeems to have been regarded rather as a puniſhment inflicted, than as a duty required. According to that of Seneca; "Nec quic-"quam gravius aflicitur, quam qui ad ſupplicium pœnitentiæ "traditus." Where he ſpeaks of repentance as the greateſt puniſhment a man can ſuffer. But I do not find that they preſcribe and urge it upon men as a duty of religion to acknowledge their guilt to God, with an ingenuous godly ſorrow and deep humiliation, for having ſinned againſt him. Nor, indeed, could they very conſiſtently do it, conſidering the apologies they frequently make for ſin, to ſhew that men are not to be blamed or condemned on the account of it, which I ſhall have occaſion to take notice of.

Under the greateſt outward evils and calamities, they did not direct men to humble themſelves under the hand of God, and to reflect upon their ſins as the cauſes of thoſe evils. Inſtead of this, they talked in a high magnificent ſtrain, that theſe things were no evils at all, and that let what would befal them, they had ſtrength ſufficient to bear it. "Dare to look up to God (ſaith Epictetus) "and ſay, make uſe of me for the future as thou wilt: I am of "the ſame mind with thee: I am equal to any thing which thou

" ſhalt lay upon me." This ſeems to me to be the meaning of the phraſe here uſed in the original, ἵσος εἰμὶ. He adds, " I refuſe nothing " which ſeems good to thee: lead me where thou wilt (*i*)," &c. Here and in what follows, as well as in other parts of his writings, there are admirable ſtrains of reſignation, and compliance with the will of God: though I am ſorry to obſerve, that there is too frequently along with it a mixture of ſelf-ſufficiency, and confidence in his own ſtrength, without that humble ſenſe of his own weakneſs and unworthineſs, which becomes ſuch creatures as we are in this preſent ſtate of imperfection and ſin (*k*).

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(*i*) Epictet. Diſſert. book ii. chap. 16. ſect. 4.

(*k*) That reſignation to God which makes ſo great an appearance in the writings of the Stoics, and which has been often produced as an inſtance of their devout temper of mind, ſeems, if duly examined, to be in ſeveral reſpects different from that meek and humble ſubmiſſion to the will of God which Chriſtianity requires. Stoicifm preſcribes an unfeeling temper under afflictions. It is a ſtiffneſs of ſoul that ſcorns to bend under adverſity, and proceeds upon the ſuppoſition that no external calamities are evils, or can really hurt us in the leaſt: that they are things of an indifferent nature, and in which we have no concern: and that abſtracting from all foreign helps, or hope of future happineſs, the mind has ſtrength enough in itſelf, to deſpiſe and overcome the very worſt events which can poſſibly befal us. The Stoical reſignation, ſtrictly conſidered, leaves no room for deprecating calamities, or for humble applications to God for removing or allaying them. This, indeed, has a ſhew of an invincible greatneſs of mind, which is apt to dazzle us; but does not ſeem to be ſuitable to our condition and circumſtances in this preſent ſtate, or to comport with the deſigns of Providence. If God ſendeth afflictions and adverſities upon us, it muſt be ſuppoſed to be his will that we ſhould have an affecting ſenſe of them, ſo as not to deſpiſe or make light of his corrections and trials, as if they were things that do not concern us: and therefore to ſtand out againſt them with an unfeeling apathy, cannot be eſteemed a proper reſignation or conformity to the Divine will. How much more agreeable to reaſon and humanity is the reſignation preſcribed in the Holy Scriptures, and of which our Lord Jeſus Chriſt hath given us the moſt perfect example? It is a bearing affliction with a patient, but with a tender and ſubmiſſive frame of ſpirit. It alloweth us the

One ſhould think, that at the time of death, in reflecting on the errors of a paſt life, ſome acknowledgments of our faults, and petitions for pardoning mercy, would be neceſſary: yet when Epictetus introduces a dying man making his addreſs to God, nothing of this appears: it is all in a ſtrain of ſelf-confidence, aſſerting his own perfect conformity and obedience to the will of God, without the leaſt acknowledgment of any failure or neglect of duty he had been ever guilty of (*l*). I ſhall here ſubjoin Miſs Carter's note upon it, in her excellent tranſlation of Epictetus. "I wiſh (ſays ſhe) it were poſſible to palliate the oſtentation of this "paſſage, by applying it to the ideal perfect character." [i. e. to the character of the Stoical wiſe man, which ſome look upon to be only an ideal one.] "But it is in a general way, that Epictetus "hath propoſed ſuch a dying ſpeech, as cannot without ſhock-"ing arrogance be uttered by any one born to die. Unmixed as

emotions of ſorrow under them, and that we may pray to have them removed or alleviated, but in an entire ſubmiſſion of our own wills to the will of God, and without murmuring or repining at any of his diſpenſations. It inſtructs us to regard them, in many caſes, not only as trials to exerciſe our faith and patience, and other virtues, but as tokens of the Divine diſpleaſure againſt us for our ſins, which are deſigned to humble us, and to put us upon proper methods of correcting our miſcarriages, and conciliating the Divine favour. The Stoical wiſe man could not conſiſtently conſider them in this view. His reſignation is rather an aſſent to the will of God than a ſubmiſſion to it, according to that of Seneca: "Nihil cogor, "nihil patior invitus, nec ſervio Deo ſed aſſentio *." Taken in connection with the reſt of their principles, the reſignation preſcribed by the Stoics ſeems to be a part of the ſcheme they had formed for ſecuring that liberty and ſelf-ſufficiency, to raiſe men to which is the great aim of their philoſophy.

(*l*) Epict. Diſſert. book iv. chap. 10. ſect. 2.

* Sen. de Provid. cap. 5.

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" it is with any acknowledgments of faults or imperfections at " preſent, or with any ſenſe of guilt on account of the paſt, it " muſt give every ſober reader a very diſadvantageous opinion of " ſome principles of the philoſophy on which it is founded, as " contradictory to the voice of conſcience, and formed on an abſo- " lute ignorance or neglect of the condition and circumſtances of " ſuch a creature as man."

And yet ſometimes they cannot help making acknowledgments, which ſhould have led them to an humbler way of thinking. " If " we would be equal judges of all things (ſaith Seneca) let us in " the firſt place perſuade ourſelves, that none of us is without " fault."—" Hoc primum nobis ſuadeamus, neminem noſtrum " eſſe ſine culpâ." He afterwards adds, " Who is he that pro- " feſſes himſelf with reſpect to all laws to be innocent?"—" Quis " eſt iſte qui ſe profitetur omnibus legibus innocentem (*m*)?" Epictetus ſeems to ſay, that " to be abſolutely faultleſs is impra- " ticable (*n*)." And that " the beginning of philoſophy, at leaſt " to ſuch as enter upon it in a proper manner, is a conſciouſneſs " of our own weakneſs and inability in neceſſary things (*o*)." M. Antoninus having mentioned gravity, ſincerity, a contempt of plea- ſure, an heart never repining againſt Providence, with other vir- tues, charges the perſon he is ſpeaking to, by which he probably there intends himſelf, as having voluntarily come ſhort of them.

(*m*) Sen. de Irâ, lib. ii. cap. 27.

(*n*) Epict. Differt. book iv. chap. 12. ſect. 4.

(*o*) Ibid. book ii. chap. 11. ſect. 1.

And having mentioned the contrary faults, ſwears by the gods, " you might have eſcaped theſe vices long ago (*p*)." And is not here matter of ingenuous confeſſion and humiliation before God? Though it muſt be owned, that he elſewhere repreſents all ſins and faults as involuntary.

We ſee, by the inſtances I have mentioned, that the Stoics were ſometimes obliged to come down from their heights, and expreſs themſelves in a lower ſtrain. But the general tendency of their principles led them to an undue ſelf-exaltation; and this entered into the character of their wiſe and virtuous man. An inſtance of this we have in Heraclitus, a philoſopher much admired by the Stoics, who in many things adhered to the tenets of his philoſophy. Nothing can be more boaſtful and aſſuming, or diſcover a higher degree of pride and ſelf-ſufficiency, than the manner in which he ſpeaks of himſelf in his epiſtle to Hermodorus. " I am excellent in wiſdom (ſaith he): I have performed " many difficult labours: I have vanquiſhed pleaſures; I have " vanquiſhed riches; I have vanquiſhed ambition: I have wreſtled " againſt and ſubdued cowardice and flattery. Fear and intem- " perance have nothing to ſay againſt me; ſorrow is afraid of " me; anger is afraid of me. For theſe things am I crowned, " not by Euryſtheus [as Hercules was] but by myſelf, as being " my own maſter, and under my own command." Ἐμαυτῷ ἐπι- τάτ]ων. See alſo his epiſtle to Amphidamas, in which, among

(*p*) Anton. Medit. book v. ſect. 5.

other

other high things, he ſaith of himſelf, " I ſhall not build altars " to others, but others to me (*q*)."

That great philoſopher Plotinus, ſo highly extolled by Mr. Bayle for his eminent virtues, frequently ſpeaks in the ſame vain-glorious ſtrain with the Stoics: That the wiſe and virtuous man is not impreſſed by any thing without him: that he accounteth the death of mortals, the overturning of his city, or any public calamities, no great matter: nor can the captivity of himſelf, or his neareſt friends and relations, in the leaſt diminiſh his felicity (*r*). That he is void of all fear, truſting in himſelf, πιστευσας ἑαυτῳ, that no evil ſhall ever touch him (*s*). It may help to let us into the pride of his character, that when Amelius invited him to aſſiſt at a ſacrifice, which he intended to offer to the gods at a ſolemn feſtival, he anſwered, " It is for them to come to me, not for me " to go to them (*t*)."

Some learned perſons have denied that humility, either as to name or thing, is to be found in the writings of the Pagans; and it muſt be owned, that humility is of a bad ſound among the philoſophers, and among the Stoics it is always taken for a vice: but

(*q*) Stanley's Hiſt. of Philoſ. p. 739. 741. edit. 2d, Lond. 1687.

(*r*) Plotin. Ennead. I. lib. iv. cap. 7.

(*s*) Ibid. cap. 14, 15.

(*t*) Porphyry's Life of Plotinus, prefixed to his works, p. 8. B. The ſame vain-glorious ſpirit animated the Indian brachmans. When Apollonius aſked them what they were? Iarchas, the chief of them, anſwered, that they thought themſelves gods.

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the word "humble" ſometimes occurs in the Pagan writers in a good ſenſe, nor were they altogether ſtrangers to the virtue intended by it. But if we take humility as it implies, a deep ſenſe of our own unworthineſs and inſufficiency in ourſelves, and of the manifold defects of our obedience and righteouſneſs, accompanied with a true contrition of heart for our ſins, and which carrieth us to acknowledge, that if God ſhould enter into ſtrict judgment with us we could not be juſtified in his ſight; this humility, which is oppoſed to ſelf-confidence and ſelf-dependence, and which cauſeth us to place our whole truſt in the infinite grace and mercy of God for ſalvation, ſeems not to enter into the Pagan ſyſtems of piety and morality, eſpecially that of the Stoics (*u*). There is a ſpiritual pride and ſelf-ſufficiency running through their whole ſcheme, ſcarce reconcilable to that humble frame of ſpirit which our Lord inſiſts upon as a neceſſary ingredient in the piety and virtue of ſuch imperfect creatures as we are in this preſent ſtate. Here then is a remarkable inſtance of an evangelical precept relating to a temper of mind, which is repreſented as of great importance to our acceptance with God, and which yet is not to be found in the Pagan moraliſts.

(*u*) It is true, that the Stoics ſeemed to require, that a man, as a preparative for philoſophy, ſhould have a conſciouſneſs of his own weakneſs and inability: ſee a paſſage to this purpoſe in Epictetus, cited above, p. 179. But the deſign of their philoſophy, when once a man was engaged in it, was to inſpire him with a confidence in his own ſtrength, and the abſolute ſufficiency of his own virtue.

CHAP.

CHAP. X.

The Stoics gave excellent precepts with regard to the duties men owe to one another. Yet they carried their doctrine of apathy so far, as to be in some instances not properly consistent with a humane disposition and a charitable sympathy. They said fine things concerning forgiving injuries and bearing with other men's faults. But in several respects they carried this to an extreme, and placed it on wrong foundations, or enforced it by improper motives. This is particularly shewn with regard to those two eminent philosophers Epictetus and Marcus Antoninus. The most antient Stoics did not allow pardoning mercy to be an ingredient in a perfect character.

THE Stoics were particularly remarkable for the precepts and directions they gave with regard to the duties men owe to one another. They taught that men were born to be helpful to each other in all the offices of mutual assistance and benevolence, and that they are united by the strongest ties, as all belonging to one common city of gods and men (*x*). Many of their precepts tended to set the obligations we are under to love and do good to one another, and to all mankind, in a strong and affecting light. Yet it must be acknowledged, that some parts of their scheme were little consistent with that humanity and

(*x*) Cicero de Finib. lib. iii. cap. 19. p. 258.

mutual

mutual benevolence, which it was the deſign of many of their precepts to recommend.

To ſupport their vain-glorious ſcheme of ſelf-ſufficiency and independency, they preſcribed an unnatural apathy. Their wiſe man was to be devoid of paſſions, of fear and grief, of ſorrow and joy. He muſt not be grieved for the loſs of wife, children, or friends, or for any calamity which can befal himſelf or them, or even for the public diſtreſſes and calamities of his country. There is a fragment of a treatiſe in Plutarch to ſhew, that the Stoics ſpeak greater improbabilities than the poets: and he produces as an inſtance of it, their aſſerting, that their wiſe man continues fearleſs and invincible in the ſubverſion of the walls of his city, and in other great calamities of a public nature (*y*)." Seneca ſays, in his 74th epiſtle, that " a wiſe man is not afflicted " at the loſs of his friends or children."—" Non affligitur ſapiens " liberorum amiſſione aut amicorum." And in the ſame epiſtle, among the things which ſhould not grieve nor diſturb him, he reckons " the beſieging of his country, the death of his " children, and the ſlavery of his parents."—" Obſidio patriæ, " liberorum mors, parentum ſervitas (*z*)." Nor is this merely an extravagant rant of Seneca, who often gave into an hyperbolical way of expreſſion. Epictetus, one of the graveſt and moſt judicious authors among the Stoics, and who adhered very cloſely

(*y*) Plutarch. Opera, tom. II. p. 1057, 1058. edit. Xyl. Francof. 1620.

(*z*) Sen. epiſt. 74. Plotinus expreſſes himſelf to the ſame purpoſe. See above, p. 181.

to

to the principles of their philoſophy, expreſſeth himſelf to the ſame purpoſe. It is true that he ſays, " I am not to be un- " diſturbed by paſſion in the ſame ſenſe that a ſtatue is, but as " one who preſerves the natural and acquired relations, as a private " perſon, as a ſon, as a brother, as a father, as a citizen (*a*)." And he allows a man " to preſerve an affectionate temper, as be- " comes a noble ſpirited and happy perſon (*b*)." It is uſual with the Stoics to throw in every now and then ſome hints, which ſeem to correct and ſoften their extravagant maxims, and reduce them within the bounds of nature and humanity. But that great philoſopher himſelf has ſeveral paſſages which it is very difficult for the moſt candid cenſurer to interpret in a favourable ſenſe. Having mentioned thoſe which he ſays are called " great events," viz. wars and ſeditions, the deſtruction of numbers of men, and the overthrow of cities, he aſks, " What great matter is there in " all this? Nothing. What great matter is there in the death " of numbers of oxen, numbers of ſheep, or in the burning or " pulling down numbers of neſts of ſtorks or ſwallows?" He affirms, that " theſe caſes are perfectly alike: the bodies of men " are deſtroyed, and the bodies of ſheep and oxen: the houſes of " men are burnt, and the houſes or neſts of ſtorks. What is " there great and dreadful in all this?" He owns afterwards, that there is a difference between a man and a ſtork; but not in body (*c*). To talk with ſuch indifference of great public cala-

(*a*) Epict. Differt. book iii. chap. 2. ſect. 3.

(*b*) Ibid. chap. 24. ſect. 4.

(*c*) Ibid. book i. chap. 28. ſect. 3.

mities, is more a proof of the want of humanity than of a real greatneſs of mind, and is not well conſiſtent with a true benevolence towards mankind, or with a generous patriotiſm or love to our country, which yet the Stoics made great profeſſion of. To the ſame purpoſe he expreſſes himſelf in another remarkable paſſage, the deſign of which is to ſignify, that the ſlaughter of armies is an indifferent matter; and that it ought not to have given Agamemnon concern if the Greeks were routed and ſlain by the Trojans (*d*). The note of the ingenious tranſlator before-mentioned upon this paſſage appears to me to be a juſt one. " As " the Stoical doctrine all along forbids pity and compaſſion, it " will have even a king look upon the welfare of his people, " and a general upon the preſervation of his ſoldiers, as a matter " quite foreign and indifferent to him (*e*)."

With reſpect to croſſes and adverſe events of a private nature; Epictetus every-where treats them as if they were nothing to us at all. I ſhall mention one paſſage of this kind among many others that might be produced. " A ſon is dead (ſaith he). What hath " happened? A ſon is dead. Nothing more? Nothing.—— " A ſhip is loſt. What hath happened? A ſhip is loſt.—— " He is carried to priſon. What hath happened? He is carried " to priſon.——That he is unhappy, is an addition that every " one makes of his own." Epictetus adds, That " Jupiter hath " made theſe things to be no evils: and that he has opened you

(*d*) Epict. Diſſert. book iii. chap. 22. ſect. 4.

(*e*) Ibid. marg. note.

" the

" the door whenever they do not ſuit you: Go out, man, and " do not complain (*f*)." The reader cannot but obſerve, that though he ſpeaks with ſuch indifference of theſe things, as if they were nothing at all, and ſhould not give us the leaſt diſturbance, yet he moſt inconſiſtently ſuppoſes, that they may be ſo grievous as to render life inſupportable; and in that caſe adviſes a man to put an end to his life, that he may get rid of them.

There is little room in the Stoical ſcheme for that affectionate ſympathy with others in diſtreſs, which Chriſtianity requires, and which is ſo amiable a part of an humane diſpoſition. And they ſeem not willing to allow the workings of the natural tender affections. Epictetus blames Homer for repreſenting Ulyſſes as ſitting and crying upon a rock, when he longed to ſee his wife. " If Ulyſſes (ſays he) did indeed cry and bewail himſelf, he was " not a good man (*g*)." And he elſewhere declares, that " no " good man laments, nor ſighs, nor groans (*h*)." Yet in his Enchiridion he ſays, " If you ſee any one weeping for grief, " either that his ſon is gone abroad or dead, or that he hath " ſuffered in his affairs, take heed that the appearance may not " hurry you away with it. As far as words go, however, do " not diſdain to condeſcend to him, and even, if it ſhould ſo " happen, to groan with him. Take heed, however, not to

(*f*) Epict. Diſſert. book iii. chap. 8. ſect. 2.

(*g*) Ibid. book iii. chap. 24. ſect. 1.

(*h*) Ibid. book ii. chap. 13. ſect. 2.

" groan inwardly too (*i*)." What a ſtrange philoſophy was this! They might put on an outward appearance of ſympathizing with their friends, but they were to take great care that there ſhould be nothing in the temper of their minds anſwering to that appearance.

Thus the Stoics, whilſt they aimed at greatneſs of mind, in effect ſtrove to ſtifle the kind and humane affections. Epictetus compares the death of a friend to the breaking of an old pipkin, in which one uſes to cook his meat: and aſks, " Muſt you die " with hunger, becauſe you do not uſe your old pipkin? Do you " not fend and buy a new one (*k*)?" Who can without ſome indignation read this mean repreſentation of the death of a beloved and eſteemed friend? But Marcus Antoninus's good-nature got the better of his Stoical principles. He ſhed tears at the death of his old tutor: and when ſome about the court put him in mind of his uſual firmneſs and ſteadineſs, Antoninus Pius replied in his defence: " You muſt give him leave to be a man: neither philo- " ſophy nor imperial dignity can extinguiſh our natural affec- " tions (*l*)." Cato of Utica, rigid Stoic as he was, carried his ſorrow for the death of his brother Cæpio to an extraordinary degree. Plutarch, in his account of Cato's life, obſerves, that upon this occaſion he ſhewed himſelf more a fond brother than a philo-

(*i*) Epict. Enchirid. chap. 16. Miſs Carter's tranſlation.

(*k*) Epict. Diſſert. book iv. chap. 10. ſect. 5.

(*l*) See the Life of Marcus Antoninus, prefixed to the Glaſgow tranſlation of his Meditations, p. 13.

ſopher,

ſopher, not only in the exceſs of grief, bewailing and embracing the dead body, but alſo in the extravagant expences of the funeral: and that this was blamed by ſome, as not ſuiting with Cato's uſual moderation in other things. But how juſtly blameable was that philoſophy which was of ſuch a kind, that a man could not act up to it, without endeavouring to extinguiſh the tendereſt ſentiments of the human nature! Our Saviour's weeping over his beloved friend Lazarus, and the ſorrows he expreſſed upon a foreſight of the approaching miſeries of the Jews, and deſtruction of Jeruſalem, are ſtriking inſtances of the moſt humane tenderneſs and friendly affections, mixed with the trueſt greatneſs of ſoul. And how much more juſt as well as amiable is the model of a perfect character, as actually exemplified in the life of our bleſſed Lord, than the Stoics, the moſt eminent of the Pagan moraliſts, were able to form, even in idea, in the feigned deſcription they give us of their perfect wiſe man (*m*).

With

(*m*) The Goſpel, in this as well as other inſtances, guards againſt extremes. It allows the tender movements of humanity and compaſſion on proper occaſions, but preſcribes a due moderation to be obſerved: that we be not ſwallowed up of overmuch ſorrow, nor mourn as thoſe that have no hope. The Stoics thought it unbecoming their wiſe man to give way to the movements of ſorrow in any caſe, and particularly on funeral occaſions. On the other hand, the Chineſe laws and cuſtoms, and Confucius himſelf, their great moraliſt, ſeem to have encouraged a ſorrow beyond all reaſonable bounds. We are told concerning that philoſopher, that he conſtantly ſhewed great grief on the death of his friends and relatives, and on occaſion of the death of many others, and even carried it to an exceſs. It was an old cuſtom in China, that the time of mourning for a parent ſhould be three years; this he would have obſerved with the utmoſt ſtrictneſs, and reproved one of his diſciples, who thought ſome abatement might be allowed. He approved the conduct of an emperor, who hid himſelf three years in the royal garden or grove where his father was buried, and abandoned himſelf to his grief, ſo as not to take any

With regard to the forgiving injuries, the bearing with the weakneſſes and faults of others, and ſhewing a good-will even to thoſe that offend us, which is a noble part of our duty, there are many admirable paſſages, both in Epictetus and Antoninus, in which this excellent temper and conduct is urged and enforced by a variety of conſiderations. Many of the motives to engage us to it are the ſame which are propoſed in the Holy Scriptures (*n*). But they ſometimes carry it too far, and place this noble duty on a wrong foundation, or puſh it to an extreme which may prove prejudicial. The deſign of the eighteenth chapter of the firſt book of Epictetus's Diſſertations, as given by Arrian, is to ſhew that we are not to be angry with the errors of others. A good precept, but which he there builds on a foundation that will not bear it, viz. " That all men act according to their perſuaſion: that even " thieves and adulterers act from a wrong perſuaſion or error in " their judgment, that it is for their advantage to ſteal, or de- " bauch their neighbour's wife. And while they have this per-

any care of the affairs of government, or converſe with any body. He ſays, that the antient kings, whom he highly eſteemed, acted after this manner; and that in the book of offices it is taught, that when a king was dead, his ſon and ſucceſſor gave himſelf up to grief for three years, and committed affairs during that time wholly to an adminiſtrator, who governed in his ſtead. Scient. Sin. lib. iii. P. vii. p. 100 et 130. I think the moſt partial admirer of Confucius and the Chineſe conſtitutions muſt acknowledge, that this is carrying things to an extreme, which is both unreaſonable in itſelf, and prejudicial to ſociety.

(*n*) Among the many motives to forgiveneſs urged by Epictetus and Antoninus, I do not remember that they ever take notice of that which is particularly inſiſted on by our Saviour, and is of the higheſt conſequence: " If you forgive men their " treſpaſſes, your heavenly Father will alſo forgive you: but if ye forgive not men " their treſpaſſes, neither will your Father forgive your treſpaſſes." Matt. vi. 14, 15.

" ſuaſion, they cannot act otherwiſe. That therefore we ought " not to be angry at them, nor endeavour to deſtroy them, but " to pity them for their miſtakes, and ſhew them their errors, " and they will amend their faults." This is the ſubſtance of what Epictetus ſays in the firſt ſection of that chapter. The Goſpel preſcribes all that reaſon and humanity requires in ſuch a caſe, but upon far juſter principles. Miſs Carter's note upon it, in her excellent tranſlation of Epictetus, deſerves notice. " The moſt " ignorant perſons often practiſe what they know to be evil: and " they who voluntarily ſuffer, as many do, their inclination to " blind their judgment, are not juſtified by following it. The " doctrine therefore of Epictetus here and elſewhere on this head, " contradicts the voice of reaſon and conſcience: it deſtroys all " guilt and merit, all puniſhment and reward, all blame of our- " ſelves or others, all ſenſe of miſbehaviour towards our fellow- " creatures or our Creator. No wonder that ſuch philoſophers " did not teach repentance towards God." Epictetus frequently repreſents ignorance as the cauſe of all our faults (*o*). And Antoninus often talks after the ſame manner. " It is cruel (ſays he) " to hinder men from deſiring or purſuing what appears to them " as their proper good: and yet you ſeem in a certain manner to " be chargeable with this conduct, when you are angry at the " miſtakes and wrong actions of men; for all are carried to what " appears to them to be their proper good. But, ſay you, it is " not their proper good. Well: inſtruct them then, and teach

(*o*) See his Diſſertations, book i. chap. 26. ſect. 1. And ibid. chap. 28. ſect. 2.

" them,

" them better: and do not be angry at them (*p*)." But it frequently happens, that it would be a vain attempt to inſtruct them; though undoubtedly it would be well done to endeavour, as far as we can, to make them ſenſible of their guilt, and reclaim them from their evil courſes. But in many inſtances it is not for want of knowing what is right that men do wrong, but becauſe they are carried away by inordinate appetite; and there is often no other way of dealing with them, but puniſhing and reſtraining them by terror. And ſo no doubt Antoninus himſelf was obliged to act, or he could not well have fulfilled his duty as an emperor in the adminiſtration of the government. Epictetus has another paſſage of the ſame kind, proper to be here taken notice of, in which he evidently carries a noble precept too far: " When any perſon doth ill " by you, or ſpeaks ill of you, remember that he acts or ſpeaks " from a ſuppoſition of its being his duty. Now, it is not poſſible " that he ſhould follow what appears right to you, but what ap- " pears ſo to himſelf. Therefore, if he judges from a wrong " appearance, he is the perſon hurt, ſince he is the perſon de- " ceived (*q*)." To deliver this, as Epictetus ſeems here to do, as a general rule with reſpect to all perſons that do ill to others, or ſpeak ill of them, is ſetting an excellent duty concerning bearing injuries and calumnies on a wrong foundation. For many caſes may happen, in which the moſt extenſive charity will not be able to ſuppoſe, that the injurious perſon or calumniator thinks he does right, and is honeſtly deceived in what he looks upon to be his

(*p*) Anton. Medit. book vi. ſect. 27.

(*q*) See his Enchirid. chap. 42. Miſs Carter's tranſlation.

duty. It frequently happens, that perſons ſpread calumnies againſt others, knowing them to be falſe and injurious, from an envious and malicious principle.

It was a maxim of Socrates and Plato, that " as all error is in-" voluntary, ſo no man is willingly wicked or unjuſt in his actions, " ſince all deſire truth and goodneſs." To this Marcus Antoninus refers book vii. ſect. 63. and he himſelf talks to the ſame purpoſe: " Men are not to be blamed (ſays he) for they never " do wrong willingly." And again: " If any do wrong, ſurely " it is unwillingly and ignorantly. It is unwillingly that any ſoul " is deprived of truth by erring, or of juſtice by a conduct un-" ſuitable to the object (*r*)." But this way of talking is more good-natured than juſt. For certain it is, that there are many perſons, who knowingly and wilfully commit actions, which they are ſenſible are unjuſt, impelled by pride, envy, avarice, ambition, and ſenſual appetite. All errors are not involuntary: they may often be ſaid to be voluntary, ſince they are owing to a wilful neglect of examining and uſing proper means for information. And to exclude the will from any part of wicked actions, and to repreſent them all as owing to involuntary errors of judgment, is to excuſe the worſt of crimes, and take away the evil of them. Antoninus ſometimes plainly ſuppoſes the contrary. In a paſſage quoted before, having mentioned ſeveral virtues, he charges himſelf, or the perſon he is there ſpeaking to, as having voluntarily, ἑκὼν, come ſhort of them (*s*).

(*r*) Anton. book xii. ſect. 12. and book xi. ſect. 18.

(*s*) Ibid. book v. ſect. 5.

elſewhere he ſaith, that " he that willingly lies, ἑκὼν ψευδόμενος, " is guilty of impiety; for the nature of the whole is truth, and " the cauſe of all truth (*t*)." Where he ſuppoſes, contrary to what he himſelf and Plato had ſaid, that a man may willingly depart from truth.

Another reaſon which Antoninus frequently gives for not being angry at the faults of others, is drawn from their being neceſſary and unavoidable. Thus, to induce us not to be angry at any man's faults, he would have us conſider that he is forced to it: and aſks, " What elſe could he do (*u*)?" This is a thought which he frequently repeats in various forms. Speaking of thoſe that have wrong maxims of good and evil, pleaſure and plain, glory and ignominy, he ſays; " If they act wrong, we ought to recollect " that they are under a neceſſity of acting thus (*x*)." He compares one that does wrong to a man whoſe armpits or breath are diſagreeable: " How can the man help it (ſays he) that has ſuch " a mouth, and ſuch armpits (*y*)?" And again, " One who " expects a vicious man ſhould not do wrong, is as abſurd as one " expecting a fig-tree ſhould not produce the natural juice of " the figs, or that an infant ſhould not cry, or a horſe ſhould not " neigh, or ſuch other neceſſary things. What can the man do,

(*t*) Anton. Medit. book ix. ſect. 1.

(*u*) Ibid. book x. ſect. 30.

(*x*) Ibid. book viii. ſect. 14.

(*y*) Ibid. book v. ſect 28.

" that

" that has ſuch diſpoſitions?" I do not deny, but that to expreſs the power of evil habits, which induce a moral impotency, compariſons may be ſometimes aptly drawn from the things that are phyſically neceſſary; but great care ſhould be taken not to carry it too far, as if bad men were not to be blamed for the evil actions they commit, and as if thoſe actions were what they could not poſſibly avoid doing. And I think it muſt be acknowledged that Antoninus has puſhed it to an extreme. I ſhall only mention one paſſage more to the ſame purpoſe. " It is the part of a mad-" man (ſays he) to expect impoſſibilities: now it is impoſſible that " vicious men ſhould act another part than we ſee they act (z)." This is not true, if applied to particular actions. There is not one bad action which a wicked man commits, but it was poſſible for him in that very inſtance to have acted otherwiſe.

(z) Anton. Medit. book v. ſect. 17. The author of the book De L'Eſprit obſerves, that the famous Mr. Fontenelle contemplated the wickedneſs of men without ſharpneſs or bitterneſs, conſidering it as the neceſſary effect " de l'en-" chainement univerſel,"—" of the univerſal concatenation of things." See De l'Eſprit, diſc. 4. chap. 14. But if this was a juſt reaſon for not cenſuring or being angry at any man for his wicked deeds, he ought, upon the ſame principle, not to have acknowledged a good man's merit, or to have allowed him any praiſe or reward for his virtuous actions. Another French author, who maintains the ſame principle of univerſal neceſſity, does not draw ſo good-natured a concluſion from it as Mr. Fontenelle: for though, he thinks, the criminal perſon ſhould not feel any remorſe for the evil he has done, becauſe he could not help it, yet he ſuppoſes it may be neceſſary for the public good to deſtroy him, as we do mad dogs or ſerpents. See Le Diſcours ſur la Vie Heureuſe, at the end of Les Penſees Philoſophiques. And, indeed, if one man is neceſſitated by the fatal chain to commit bad actions, why may not another man be equally ſuppoſed to be neceſſitated to hate, to cenſure, and puniſh him? So that at the bottom this doctrine will bring no great comfort even to evil-doers, nor be a good reaſon for exerciſing forbearance towards them, or forgiving them.

Another conſideration which is inſiſted upon both by Epictetus and Antoninus, to engage us to bear with thoſe that offend us, and not to be angry at them for any thing they do to us, is, that in reality and they do us no injury. Epictetus lays it down as a maxim, that " one cannot be in fault, and another the ſufferer (*a*)." Upon which the ingenious tranſlator very properly remarks, " This is a Stoic " extravagance; the very thing which conſtitutes the fault of " the one in this caſe, is that he makes the other ſuffer." Epictetus has many good things about patience under injuries. But the truth is, that, according to him, no injury can be done to a good man. " No one (ſays he) either hurts or benefits another: " but the principles which we hold concerning every thing, it is " this that hurts us, this that overturns us (*b*)." He gives it as a maxim, that " one man doth not hurt another, but that every " man is hurt and profited by his own actions (*c*)." In like manner Maximus Tyrius has an expreſs diſſertation to prove, that an injury is not to be retaliated. And he goes upon this principle, that a good man cannot be injured by a wicked man; becauſe he has no good thing which it is in the power of a bad man to ſpoil or deprive him of, and that a good man can neither do nor ſuffer an injury. Seneca often talks in the ſame ſtrain, eſpecially in his tract, Quod in ſapientem non cadit injuria (*d*). So alſo Antoninus ſays, " I cannot be hurt by any of them, ſince none of

(*a*) Epict. Diſſert. book ii. chap. 13. ſect. 2.

(*b*) Ibid. book iv. chap. 5. ſect. 4.

(*c*) Ibid. chap. 13. ſect. 2.

(*d*) See particularly cap. 15 et 16.

" them

" them can involve me in any thing diſhonourable or de-
" formed (*e*)." And he often argues, that we ought not to be angry at any injuſtice men do to us, becauſe they cannot hurt us. But though this conſideration may be ſo managed, as greatly to moderate our reſentments, yet if it be underſtood in its rigour, according to the Stoical principles, it leaves nothing properly praiſe-worthy in forgiveneſs, or rather leaves no room for forgiveneſs at all. For if no injury be done me, where is the exerciſe of a forgiving diſpoſition? How much juſter and nobler is it to be able to ſay, he hath hurt and injured me, yet I forgive him: I bear him no malice or ill-will, but am ready, if a proper opportunity offers, to render him good for his evil? which is the temper Chriſtianity requires.

There is another conſideration urged by that worthy emperor and philoſopher Marcus Antoninus, which deſerves to be examined. It is to this purpoſe: that the injury done us is not hurtful to the whole, and what is not hurtful to the whole, cannot be really hurtful to any particular part. " What is not hurtful to the
" ſtate or city (ſays he) cannot hurt the citizen. Make uſe of this
" rule upon every conception of any thing as hurting you. If
" the city (by which he there means the univerſe) be not hurt
" by it, I cannot be hurt (*f*)." And again: " If this event be
" not hurtful to the whole, why am I diſturbed by it? Nay,

(*e*) Anton. Medit. book ii. ſect. 1.

(*f*) Ibid. book v. ſect. 22.

" who

" who can hurt the whole (*g*)?" To this may be added what he elſewhere obſerves, " there is no univerſal wickedneſs to hurt the " univerſe. Particular wickedneſs of any individual hurts not " another, it hurts himſelf only; who yet has this gracious pri- " vilege, that as ſoon as he heartily deſires it, he may be free from " it altogether (*h*)." I do not well ſee how it can be ſaid upon theſe principles, that there is any hurt in ſin at all. It cannot hurt the univerſe, it cannot hurt any other man but him that commits it, nor, according to this way of reaſoning, can it hurt the man himſelf. For nothing can hurt any part that does not hurt the whole: and ſin is ſo far from hurting the whole, that according to the Stoic principles it contributes to the harmony of the univerſe, and as ſuch may be ſaid to be agreeable to the nature of the whole (*i*). And he expreſly aſſerts, that " nothing advantageous " to the whole is hurtful to the part (*k*)."

I ſhall mention ſome other paſſages which tend to illuſtrate this. " When you are diſguſted, ſays he, with the impudence " of any one, immediately aſk yourſelf, Can the univerſe then be " without the ſhameleſs? It cannot. Do not demand then what " is impoſſible. For this is one of thoſe ſhameleſs men who

(*g*) Anton. Medit. ſect. 35.

(*h*) Ibid. book viii. ſect. 55.

(*i*) According to the account Plutarch gives from Chryſippus, ſin tends to the good of the whole. He ſays, that virtue and vice, like the difference and variety of the ſeaſons, tend to the harmony of the univerſe. De Stoic. Repug. Opera, p. 1050, 1051, tom. 2. edit. Xyl. See alſo ibid. p. 1066.

(*k*) Anton. Medit. book x. ſect. 6.

" muſt

" muſt needs be in the univerſe. Have the ſame queſtion alſo at " hand, when ſhocked at the crafty, the faithleſs, or the faulty " in any reſpect." See Ant. Medit. b. ix. ſect. 42. Here and in ſome other paſſages he ſpeaks as if thoſe perſons and actions, which ſeem to us bad and vicious, were ſo connected with the whole, as to be neceſſary to the order of it, and without which the whole would run into confuſion. And accordingly he ſuppoſes, that every event which comes to paſs tends to the proſperity and felicity of Jupiter himſelf in his adminiſtration, who never would have permitted this event if it had not conduced to good. But if this be applied to particular bad men and particular wicked actions, as if theſe very men and thoſe evil actions were neceſſary to the good order of the univerſe, and that the whole would be leſs perfect, and God leſs happy, if thoſe particular perſons had not exiſted, and thoſe actions had not been done, this appears to me to be a falſe ſuppoſition, and diſhonourable to the Deity. It is indeed for the good of the univerſe, and the glory of the divine adminiſtration, that God hath made reaſonable creatures endued with liberty and free agency; and that he dealeth with them as ſuch, and conſequently permits them to uſe their liberty even in doing evil actions. But it does not follow, that every particular action of theirs conduceth to good, and that God permitteth it for that reaſon. He may indeed in his infinite wiſdom over-rule it to good, and bring good out of it; but in its own nature vice and ſin is evil, and of a pernicious tendency: and therefore a righteous and holy God hath a juſt diſpleaſure againſt it, and againſt the perſons that commit it; and may, in an entire conſiſtency with his governing wiſdom, righteouſneſs, and

goodneſs, puniſh them for it. And in like manner a good and virtuous man may and ought to conceive a juſt abhorrence of ſuch evil actions, and may, without any imputation upon his goodneſs, be diſpleaſed with thoſe that are guilty of them.

I acknowledge that there are many conſiderations, ſeveral of which are very properly urged both by Epictetus and Antoninus, which ſhould diſpoſe us not to be too rigorous in our cenſures upon the actions of others, and to put the moſt favourable conſtruction upon them, which the circumſtances of the caſe can poſſibly admit. But it is certainly wrong, under pretence of engaging men not to be angry at the faults of others, to endeavour to palliate the evil and deformity of vice and ſin, and to make ſuch a repreſentation of it as if it were true, and, purſued to its genuine conſequences, would ſhew that neither God nor man ſhould be angry at it, and puniſh it. This ſeems to be the plain tendency of ſome of the paſſages which have been produced from Marcus Antoninus; though I am far from charging that excellent emperor and philoſopher with intending thoſe conſequences, and indeed he has other paſſages of a different ſtrain. For though he expreſly aſſerts, as has been ſhewn, that "the particular wickedneſs "of any individual hurts not another, it hurts himſelf only; and "that no injury or evil action can be hurtful to the whole;" yet he elſewhere ſays, that "he who is guilty of an injury is guilty of "an impiety: for ſince the nature of the whole has formed the "rational animals for being uſeful to one another, he who tranſ-"greſſes this her will, is thus guilty of impiety againſt the moſt an-"cient and venerable of the gods." By which he means what he

ſo

ſo often calls the whole, and the nature of the whole. Here he ſeems plainly to ſuppoſe, contrary to what he elſewhere teaches, both that a man may hurt and do injury to another of the ſame ſpecies with himſelf, and that in ſo doing he is guilty of an impiety againſt the whole. And he there adds, that " he who " willingly lies is guilty of impiety, in as far as by deceiving he " does an injury; and he who lies unwillingly, in as far as his " voice diſſents from the nature of the whole; which as he had " obſerved juſt before is truth, and the firſt cauſe of all truth."— He there alſo ſays, " that he who purſues pleaſure as good, and " ſhuns pain as evil, or who is not indifferently diſpoſed to pain " and pleaſure, life and death, glory and ignominy, all which the " nature of the whole regards as indifferent, is plainly guilty of " impiety (*l*)."

I have inſiſted the more largely on the Stoical doctrine of forgiving injuries, and doing good to thoſe that have uſed us ill, becauſe it is that part of their doctrine in which they have been thought to come up to ſome of the ſublimeſt precepts of morality as taught by our Saviour. I readily acknowledge that an excellent ſpirit breathes in ſeveral of their precepts on this head. But it appears from the obſervations which have been made, that by placing that duty in ſome reſpects on a wrong foundation, and enforcing it by motives which will not bear a ſtrict ſcrutiny, and carrying it in ſome inſtances to an extreme, they weaken what they endeavour to eſtabliſh. All that is juſt in this doctrine is taught

(*l*) Anton. Medit. book. ix. ſect. 1.

in the gospel, without running into extremes. The best and properest of the motives proposed by these philosophers are also there urged to engage us to bear with one another's faults and infirmities, and to forgive and do good to those that injure and offend us: besides which there are additional motives proposed, which are of the greatest weight. This duty is bound upon us by the express command and authority of God himself, who hath also made our forgiving other men their offences committed against us, a necessary condition of our obtaining the forgiveness of our own offences from God. We are assured, that the unmerciful and unforgiving shall have no mercy shewn them at the day of judgment (*m*). But especially the motives drawn from the wonderful love of God in sending his Son to suffer and die for us whilst we were yet enemies and ungodly, and the exceeding riches of his grace towards penitent sinners, together with the perfect example of a forgiving disposition in our most amiable and benevolent Saviour, must needs, where they are heartily believed, have a mighty force upon an ingenuous mind. And yet at the same time great care is taken to keep up a deep sense of the evil of sin, and an abhorrence of it in the minds of men, which is of the utmost consequence to the cause of virtue, and the good order of the moral world.

I shall conclude this part of the subject with observing, that the benevolent doctrine which hath been mentioned, seems not to have been carried by any of the Stoic philosophers so far as by Epictetus and Marcus Antoninus; both of whom lived after

(*m*) James ii. 13.

this

this doctrine had received its utmoſt improvement in the goſpel of Jeſus, and was exemplified in many of the primitive Chriſtians, who prayed for their enemies and perſecutors with their dying breath. The more ancient Stoics ſeem to have wrought up their ſcheme with greater rigor, and to have advanced maxims not very conſiſtent with that humane and forgiving diſpoſition ſo ſtrongly recommended by Marcus Antoninus. Mr. Stanley in his excellent Hiſtory of Philoſophy gives it as part of the Stoical deſcription of their wiſe man, or man of perfect virtue, that " he is " not merciful nor prone to pardon, remitting nothing of the pu- " niſhments inflicted by law, as knowing them to be proportioned " to, not exceeding, the offence; and that whoſoever ſinneth, " ſinneth out of his own wickedneſs. A wiſe man therefore is " not benign, for he who is benign mitigates the rigour of juſtice, " and conceives the puniſhments inflicted by law to be greater " than they ought: but a wiſe man knoweth the law to be good, " or a right reaſon, commanding what is to be done, and what " not (*n*)" Stanley refers for the proof of this to Laertius and Stobæus, but does not point out to the particular paſſages of thoſe authors, which therefore I ſhall here mention. The reader may conſult Laert. lib. vii. ſegm. 123. and Stobæus Eclog. Ethic. p. 78. edit. Plant. To which may be added what Seneca ſays concerning it, de Clem. lib. 2. cap. 6 et 7. where he endeavours to explain and apologize for the Stoical doctrine on this head (*o*).

" Mercy,

(*n*) Stanley's Hiſt. Philoſoph. p. 468. ſecond edit. Lond.

(*o*) Miſericordia vitium eſt animorum nimis miſerie faventium: quam ſiquis a ſapiente exigit, prope eſt ut lamentationem exigat, & in alienis funeribus gemitus.

" Mercy, ſays he, is the vice or fault of ſouls that are too favour-
" able to miſery, which if any one requireth of a wiſe man, he
" may alſo require of him lamentations and groans."—To ſhew that a wiſe man ought not to pardon he obſerves, that " pardon
" is a remiſſion of the penalty which is juſtly due; and that a
" man is ſaid to be pardoned, who ought to puniſhed: but a wiſe
" man does nothing which he ought not to do, and omits no-
" thing which he ought to do: and therefore he does not remit
" the puniſhment which he ought to exact. Yet he grants that
" which is the effect of pardon, but does it in a more honourable
" way. He ſpares, counſels, and corrects; he does the ſame
" thing as if he did pardon, but does not pardon: becauſe he that
" pardons acknowledges that he hath omitted ſomething which
" he ought to have done.—To pardon is not to puniſh thoſe
" things which you judge ought to be puniſhed."

We have a remarkable inſtance of the rigorous Stoical diſpoſition in the famous Cato of Utica, who is cried up as a perfect model of Stoical virtue, and whoſe character is ſo exquiſitely drawn by the maſterly pen of Salluſt: and one of the principal ſtrokes in his character is this, that whereas Cæſar was admired for clemency

At quare non ignoſcat dicam: conſtituamus nunc quoque, quid ſit venia, ut ſciamus dari illam ſapiente non debere. Venia eſt pœnæ meritæ remiſſio—ei ignoſcitur qui puniri debuit. Sapiens autem nihil facit, quod non debet, nihil prætermittit quod debet. Itaque pœnam quam exigere debet, non donat. Sed illud quod ex veniâ conſequi vis, honeſtiori tibi viâ tribuit.—Parcit enim ſapiens, conſulit, & corrigit. Idem facit quod ſi ignoſceret, nec ignoſcit: quoniam qui ignoſcit, fatetur aliquid ſe quod fieri debuit omiſiſſe—ignoſcere autem eſt, quæ judicas punienda non punire.

and mercy, and his readineſs to pardon, Cato was revered for his ſtrict and inflexible ſeverity: " Severitas dignitatem addiderat." In Cæſar was found a ſure refuge to the wretched; in Cato a certain vengeance to the guilty, " malis pernicies." Sal. de Bel. Catalin. cap. lv.

CHAP.

CHAP. XI.

The Stoical precepts with regard to ſelf-government conſidered. they talk in high ſtrains of regulating and ſubduing the appetites and paſſions; and yet gave too great indulgence to the fleſh'y concupiſcence, and had not a due regard to purity and chaſtity. Their doctrine of ſuicide conſidered. Some of the moſt eminent wiſe men among the Heathens, and many of our modern admirers of natural religion faulty in this reſpect. The falſhood and pernicious conſequences of this doctrine ſhewn.

LET us next proceed to conſider that part of the Stoical morals, which relates more immediately to ourſelves, and the government of our appetites and paſſions. And with regard to this, nothing can make a more glorious appearance than the general principles of the Stoics, which every-where breathe a contempt both of pleaſure and pain. They preſcribe the ſubduing and even the extinguiſhing the appetites and paſſions, and keeping them under the moſt perfect ſubjection to the laws of reaſon and virtue, and ſeem to aim at a greatneſs and dignity above the attainments of human nature. Yet if we cloſely examine their ſcheme in this reſpect, it will appear that it was in ſeveral inſtances defective, at the ſame time that in other inſtances it was carried to a degree of extravagance.

What has been already obſerved concerning the other philoſophers, is equally true of the Stoics: that whatever they might ſay

ſay in general concerning temperance and continence, and againſt a love of ſenſual pleaſures, yet in particular inſtances they gave greater allowances to fleſhly luſts and the ſenſual appetite, than were conſiſtent with the dignity of virtue and the rules of modeſty and purity. Some hints of this were given before. That unnatural and deteſtable vice, which, as I have ſhewn, was commonly charged upon the philoſophers, was looked upon by the principal of the antient Stoics, Zeno, Chryſippus, and Cleanthes, to be an indifferent thing, as Sextus Empiricus informs us (*p*). And ſome of the chief leaders of that ſect acted as if they really thought ſo. Zeno, the founder of the Stoics, allowed himſelf in that practice, and ſeems not to have had any ſcruple about it. Laertius indeed ſays, that he did it ſeldom or ſparingly, παιδαρίοις ἐχρῆτο σπανίως (*q*). But Antigonus Caryſtius, as cited by Athenæus, repreſents it as a common practice with him. Yet he was cried up as a man of exemplary virtue, and was remarkable for his gravity, auſterity, patience, and temperance. The Athenians made a memorable decree in his favour, which may be ſeen in Laertius (*r*), in which they bear him teſtimony, that he had for many years taught philoſophy in their city, and had formed the youth to virtue and ſobriety, and had in his own life given an example to all of the moſt excellent things: his practice was agreeable to his doctrine, and therefore they decreed him a golden

(*p*) Pyrrhon. Hypotyp. lib. iii. cap. 24.

(*q*) Laert. lib. vii. ſegm. 18. See Menag. Obſervat. in Laert. p. 273. edit. Wetſten.

(*r*) Laert. ubi ſupra, ſegm. 10, 11.

crown

crown on the account of his virtue and temperance, and that a ſepulchre ſhould be built for him in the Ceramicus, at the public charge, and that the decree ſhould be engraven upon two pillars. One may ſee by this, that the Heathens laid no great ſtreſs on chaſtity and continence, and that a man might paſs for a very good man among them, who was guilty of great vices and impurities (*s*). From the inſtance now mentioned, it is a natural inference, that if thoſe rigid teachers of morals paſſed ſo wrong a judgment in a caſe like this, in which the law of nature ſeems to be very clear, this affords a plain proof that they were not to be depended upon for ſound inſtructions in morality: and that if men were left merely to interpret the law of nature as they themſelves thought agreeable to reaſon, without any other or higher guide, they might be apt to judge wrong in matters of great conſequence. That famous Stoic Chryſippus, as we are told by Sextus Empiricus (*t*), held, that carnal commerce of father and daughter, of mother and ſon, of brother and ſiſter, has nothing in it contrary to reaſon: for which he quotes Chryſippus's book De Republica. Laertius gives the ſame account, and quotes that book of Chryſippus for it, and ſays, that he aſſerts it in others of his treatiſes (*u*).

(*s*) Cicero, in one of the beſt of his works, joins Ariſtippus with Socrates, and repreſents them both as excellent and extraordinary perſons of divine endowments, De Offic. lib. i. cap. 41. Whatever may be ſaid of Socrates, Ariſtippus is known to have allowed himſelf great liberties in all kinds of pleaſures. In like manner Epictetus, as has been obſerved before, gives the higheſt encomiums to Diogenes, and ſets him up as a perfect model of virtue.

(*t*) Pyrrhon. Hypotyp. ubi ſupra.

(*u*) Laert. lib. vii. ſegm. 188. Concerning the obſcenity of Zeno and the Stoics, ſee Menag. ubi ſupra, p. 277, 278.

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The ſame thing is affirmed by Plutarch, who produces a paſſage from a work of Chryſippus, which is full to this purpoſe; where he argues from its being practiſed by the brutes, that there is nothing in it abſurd or contrary to nature (*x*). Laertius farther acquaints us, that Chryſippus was cenſured for having, in his commentary on the antient phyſiology, written obſcene things concerning Jupiter and Juno, ſuch as became proſtitutes rather than gods (*y*). It appears alſo from Laertius, that Zeno, in his book of the Commonwealth, a book much applauded, and Chryſippus, in a book of the ſame title, held the community of women, and that in this they followed Plato and Diogenes (*z*). It is not therefore to be wondered at, that, as Sextus Empiricus informs us in a paſſage before cited, the Stoics thought it not abſurd or unreaſonable to cohabit with a harlot, nor to get a living by ſuch practices. But it is but juſtice to Epictetus and Antoninus to obſerve, that none of theſe maxims appear in their writings. Epictetus compares adulterers to waſps, whom all men ſhun, and endeavour to beat down: and he adviſes to abſtain, as far as poſſible, from familiarity with women before marriage; but he ſpeaks of it in very ſoft terms, and does not expreſly cenſure it as a fault, provided a man does it lawfully, i. e. by making uſe of proſtitutes allowed by the laws (*a*).

(*x*) Plutarch. de Stoic. Repugn. Oper. tom. II. p. 1044. F. 1045. A. edit. Xyl. Francof. 1620.

(*y*) Laert. ubi ſupra.

(*z*) Ibid. lib. vii. ſegm. 131.

(*a*) Epict. Diſſert. book ii. chap. 4. et Enchirid. chap. 32. Miſs Carter's tranſlation.

This may ſuffice to ſhew, that the Stoics, notwithſtanding their glorious pretences, were very looſe both in their notions and practices, with regard to that purity which is of ſo great importance to the good order and dignity of the rational nature; and in ſeveral inſtances laid aſide that modeſty which ſeems to be implanted in mankind as a fence againſt thoſe exorbitant fleſhly luſts, which diſhonour and defile the ſoul.

Another inſtance, in which the Stoics ſeem tò have allowed too great indulgence to the ſenſual appetites, relates to the drinking to exceſs. Zeno himſelf is ſaid to have been a great drinker (*b*): and Chryſippus died of a ſurfeit of drinking ſweet wine too freely at a ſacrifice, to which he was invited by his ſcholars (*c*). Cato of Utica, who was thought to have arrived to the perfection of virtue, appears to have been addicted to it. Plutarch ſays, he often ſpent whole nights in drinking (*d*). Seneca, in his tract De Tranquillitate Animi, cap. ult. recommends not only "liberalior "potio," a drinking more freely than ordinary on ſome occaſions, but that "nonnunquàm ad ebrietatem veniendum," we muſt ſometimes carry it even to drunkenneſs: and he proceeds to make an apology for it. He obſerves, that Solon and Arceſilas indulged themſelves in it. And he had ſaid before, that Cato relaxed himſelf with wine, when he was fatigued with the

(*b*) Laert. lib. vii. ſegm. 26. See alſo Menagius's Obſervations on Laertius, p. 276. edit. Wetſten.

(*c*) Laert. lib. vii. ſegm. 184.

(*d*) See Plutarch, in the Life of Cato Minor.

cares of the public; and he afterwards owns, that he was charged with drunkenneſs. " Catoni ebrietas objecta eſt." But that it would be eaſier to prove that drunkenneſs is a virtue, than that Cato was guilty of a baſe or vicious thing. " At facilius efficiet, " quiſquis objecerit hoc crimen honeſtum, quàm turpem Cato- " nem." The Stoics, held that the wiſe man might be inebriated, but not overcome: his body might be diſordered with wine, but it could not hurt his mind. They maintained, as Mr. Upton, cited by Miſs Carter, obſerves, that their wiſe man was a perfect maſter of himſelf, when he was in a fever or in drink. And indeed Epictetus ſeems to repreſent it as the prerogative of a man arrived at the perfection of wiſdom, that he is unſhaken by error and deluſion, not only when awake, but when aſleep, when warmed with wine, when diſeaſed with the ſpleen (*e*).

Another inſtance of great importance, relating to the duty incumbent upon us with regard to ourſelves, and in which the Stoics fell into a dangerous error, was their doctrine of ſuicide or ſelf-murder. Others of the philoſophers were faulty in this reſpect, but it was in a particular manner the avowed doctrine of the Stoics. They aſſerted, that in ſome caſes it was not only lawful, but a duty, for a wiſe man to diſpatch himſelf. This they call εὔλογον ἔξοδον, an exit agreeable to reaſon; when a man has a juſt cauſe of departing out of life. And Zeno the founder of the Stoic ſchool declares, that it is reaſonable for a man to put an end to his own life, not only for the ſake of his friend, or of his

(*e*) Diſſert. book ii. chap. 17. ſect. 2.

country, but " if he be under any ſevere pain or torment, or " is maimed in his limbs, or labours under any incurable diſ- " eaſe." κἂν ὑπερ συληροτέρα γένηται ἀλγηδόνι, ἢ πηρώσεσιν, ἢ νόσοις ἀνιάτοις (*f*)." Cato, who was a rigid Stoic, declares in Cicero's third book de Finib. That it was the duty of the man, whoſe conveniencies in life exceeded the inconveniencies, to continue in life: but where the inconveniencies he was under were greater than the conveniencies, or he foreſaw that it would be ſo, it was his duty to depart out of life. " In quo plura ſunt quæ " ſecundum naturam ſunt, hujus officium eſt in vitâ manere: in " quo autem ſunt plura contraria, aut fore videntur, hujus offi- " cium eſt e vitâ excedere." And he expreſly affirms, that " it " is often the duty of a wiſe man to depart out of this life, though " he be moſt happy, when it can be done opportunely: for this " is to live agreeably to nature." " Sæpe officium eſt ſapien- " tis deſciſcere a vitâ, cum ſit beatiſſimus; et id opportunè " facere poſſit: quod eſt convenienter naturæ vivere (*g*)." It is obſervable that Cato, who teaches this doctrine, lays the foundation of his moral ſyſtem in this, that every animal has from its birth a natural deſire of preſerving itſelf in its natural ſtate, and an averſion to its deſtruction, and every thing that tends to it (*h*)." In this he followed the principles of the chief maſters of the Stoic ſect. And ſince they made the perfection of virtue to conſiſt in living agreeably to nature, how it could be conſiſtent with it for

(*f*) Laert. lib. vii. ſegm. 130.

(*g*) Cicero de Finib. lib. iii. cap. 18.

(*h*) Ibid. cap. 5.

a man

a man to deſtroy himſelf, which they themſelves own to be contrary to nature, is hard to ſee. Seneca in this, as well as other inſtances, is not always conſiſtent with himſelf, but he gives large allowances to ſuicide. Speaking of the wiſe man, he ſaith, that " if he meets with many things that are troubleſome to him, and " diſturb his tranquillity, he diſmiſſes himſelf out of life; and this " he does, not merely in the laſt neceſſity, but as ſoon as ever for- " tune begins to be ſuſpected by him." " Si multa occurrunt " moleſta, & tranquillitatem turbantia, emittit ſe: nec hoc tan- " tùm in neceſſitate ultimâ facit, ſed cùm primùm illi cœperit " ſuſpecta eſſe fortuna (*i*)." And in his little tract, Cur bonis Viris mala fiant, the deſign of which is to vindicate providence with reſpect to the evils which befal good men, he beſtows the higheſt encomiums upon Cato's killing himſelf, and extols it as a moſt glorious action. And in the concluſion of that tract, he introduces God as declaring to men, that he had opened a way for them to eſcape from their calamities; and had made nothing eaſier for them than to die, which was a ſhort and ready way to liberty. This ſeems to have been a faſhionable doctrine, that ſpread much among the Romans, eſpecially thoſe of learning and quality. The elder Pliny repreſents a timely or ſeaſonable death as one of the greateſt benefits which nature hath conferred upon mankind, and that the beſt of it is, that it is what every man may procure for himſelf (*k*). And Pliny the younger mentions it as a ſign of a great ſoul to judge by reaſon, and to deliberate

(*i*) Sen. Epiſt. 70. and he argues the ſame thing more largely in his 58th Epiſtle.

(*k*) Hiſt. Natural. lib. xxviii. cap. 1. in fine.

upon

upon it, when it is proper to ſtay in life, and when to go out of it (*l*).

But what I would principally obſerve is, that Epictetus and Antoninus, who ſeem to have carried the doctrine of morals to a greater height than any of the other Stoics, plainly admit this doctrine. It is true that the former of theſe excellent philoſophers has ſome paſſages, which, at firſt view, have a different aſpect. "My friends, ſaith he, wait for God, till he ſhall give the ſignal, "and diſmiſs you from this ſervice; then return to him. For the "preſent be content to remain in this poſt where he has placed "you—Stay. Depart not inconſiderately (*m*)." And again in another place, where he has ſome noble ſtrains of reſignation to God, he ſaith; "Is it thy pleaſure I ſhould any longer continue "in being? I will continue free, of a generous ſpirit, ευπαθως, "agreeably to thy pleaſure.—But haſt thou no farther uſe for "me? Fare thou well! I have ſtaid thus long for thy ſake alone, "and no other; and now I depart in obedience to thee.—Whatever poſt or rank thou ſhalt aſſign me, like Socrates, I will "die a thouſand times rather than deſert it. If thou ſhalt ſend "me, where men cannot live conformably to nature, I do not "depart from thence in diſobedience to thy will; but as receiving my ſignal of retreat from thee. I do not deſert thee: "heaven forbid! but I perceive thou haſt no uſe for me (*n*)."

(*l*) Plin. Epiſt. lib. i. cap. 22.

(*m*) Epict. Diſſert. book i. chap. 9. ſect. 4.

(*n*) Ibid. book iii. chap. 24. ſect. 5.

But

But if we compare theſe with other paſſages of that author, we ſhall find, that after all this ſhew of an entire reſignation to the divine will, the ſignal he profeſſes to wait for from God for his departure, may be any great calamity which befals him: and of this he himſelf is to be the judge. So that in effect he allows a man to go out of life when he thinks fit, in order to free himſelf from the preſſure of ſome grievous trouble. " Is the houſe in a " ſmoke? ſaith he: if it be a moderate one I will ſtay; if a very " grievous one, I will go out. For you muſt always remember that " the door is open." ἡ θύρα ἀνεῳγέναι (*o*). Again, " if ſuffering " be not worth your while, the door is open; if it be, bear it (*p*)." And he gives it as a general rule, " Remember the principal " thing, that the door is open. Do not be more fearful than " children; but as they, when the play does not pleaſe them, " ſay, " *I will play no longer*;" ſo do you, in the ſame caſe, ſay, " *I will play no longer*;" and go: but if you ſtay, do not com- " plain (*q*)." To the ſame purpoſe, ſpeaking of the calamities of life, ſuch as the death of children, loſs of worldly ſubſtance, impriſonment, and the like, he ſaith, " Jupiter hath made theſe " things to be no evils; and he hath opened you the door, when- " ever they do not ſuit you. Go out man, and do not com- " plain (*r*)." I ſhall only add one paſſage more from Epictetus; " Hanging is not unſupportable: for, as ſoon as a man

(*o*) Epictet. Diſſert. book i. chap. 25. ſect. 2.

(*p*) Ibid. book ii. chap. 1. ſect. 3.

(*q*) Ibid. book i. chap. 24. ſect. 4.

(*r*) Ibid. book iii. chap. 8. ſect. 2. See alſo book iv. chap. 1 ſect. 12.

" has

" has learned that it is reaſonable, εὔλογον, he goes and hangs " himſelf (*s*)."

The emperor Marcus Antoninus was in this, as well as moſt other points, of the ſame ſentiments with Epictetus. Speaking of the things which a man ought to conſider, one is, that " he " ſhould judge well this very point, whether he ſhould depart out " of life, or not (*t*)." Where he ſuppoſes, that it dependeth upon a man's own determination to depart out of life, when he himſelf judges it reaſonable to do ſo. And he elſewhere allows a man, if he be hindered from living in that way that he would chuſe, " to go out of life," τοτε καὶ τῶ ζῆν ἐξιθι. And he adds, " If my houſe be ſmoky, I go out of it: and why is this looked " upon as a great matter (*u*)?" He elſewhere puts the ſuppoſition of a man's being grieved, becauſe he is hindered by a ſuperior force from accompliſhing ſome good deſign, without which life is not worth retaining: and he adviſes him in that caſe to quit life with the ſame ſerenity as if he had accompliſhed it; ἄτιθι ὧν ἐκ τῦ ζῆν εὐμένως; " go therefore out of life well pleaſed (*x*)." And in another paſſage to the ſame purpoſe, he ſeems to allow men, if they cannot attain to that conſtancy and magnanimity which they aſpire after, " to depart out of life altogether, yet not " angry, but with ſimplicity, liberty, and modeſt, having at leaſt

(*s*) Epict. Diſſert. book i. chap. 2. ſect. 1.

(*t*) Anton. Medit. book iii. ſect. 1.

(*u*) Ibid. book v. ſect. 29.

(*x*) Ibid. book. viii. ſect. 47.

 " performed

" performed this one thing well in life, that they have in this " manner departed out of it (*y*)." And again he ſays, " who " hinders you to be good and ſingle-hearted? Only do you deter- " mine to live no longer, if you are not to be ſuch a man. For " reaſon in that caſe requires you ſhould (*z*)." Gataker in his annotations on the Meditations of Antoninus, of whom he was a great admirer, paſſes a juſt cenſure on this doctrine of the Stoics, as little agreeable to piety. " Dogma pietati parùm conſenta- " neum." And I wiſh ſome notice had been taken of it in the ingenious and learned notes on the Glaſgow tranſlation of Antoninus, and which ſeem to have been deſigned to ſet the ſentiments of that great emperor and philoſopher in a proper light.

Agreeable to this doctrine of the Stoics was the practice of ſome of the chief leaders, and greateſt men of that ſect. Zeno, as Diogenes Laertius informs us, when he was very old, fell as he was going out of his ſchool, and broke his finger, which being very painful to him, he ſtrangled himſelf (*a*). Or, as Lucian has it, voluntarily put an end to his life by abſtaining from all food (*b*). Cleanthes did the ſame on account of a painful diſorder in his gums (*c*). What Cato did is well known: and Plutarch ſays,

(*y*) Anton. Medit. book x. ſect. 8.

(*z*) Ibid. ſect. 32.

(*a*) Laert. lib. vii. ſegm. 28.

(*b*) Lucian. in Macrob. Oper. tom. II. p. 473.

(*c*) Laert. lib. vii. et Lucian ubi ſupra.

that the laws enacted by the Stoa, had induced many wife men to kill themfelves, that they may be more happy (*d*).

Here is a remarkable inftance of the deficiency of the Stoic morality in a capital point of great importance. What rendered this doctrine peculiarly wrong and abfurd in the Stoics was, that they held virtue to be perfectly fufficient to its own happinefs: that the wife man is happy in the higheft degree under the greateft outward calamities and fufferings: and that bodily pains and difeafes, poverty, reproach, &c. which the world calls evils, are really no evils at all: and yet they taught, that a wife man may, and fometimes ought to put an end to his own life, to deliver himfelf from them: i. e. to put an end to a life which is perfectly happy, in order to free himfelf from things, which, according to them, are no evils, and cannot in the leaft difturb or diminifh his happinefs. Plutarch expofes them on this head with a great deal of juftice and fmartnefs. Epicurus, who had his wife man as well as the Stoics, agreed with them in opinion, that it was proper for a man to put an end to his own life when he judged it reafonable to do fo, or when the pains and miferies of life became infupportable (*e*). And in this he was more confiftent with himfelf than the Stoics; fince he looked upon pain to be the greateft evil, and therefore might have recourfe to death to get rid of it: though, as he moft unaccountably pretended to the fecret

(*d*) Plut. de commun. notit. adverf. Stoic. Oper. tom. II. p. 1063. C.

(*e*) Cic. de Finib. lib. i. cap. 15.

of being compleatly happy under the ſevereſt pains and torments, he ought not, one ſhould think, to have adviſed any man by putting an end to this preſent life, to put an end to his happineſs, ſince he had no other life in view. The Indian Gymnoſophiſts acted in this matter upon nobler principles, though they were much miſtaken in the application of them. Remarkable is the account Porphyry gives of them in his fourth book de Abſtinentiâ. After having honoured them with the higheſt encomiums, that they were famous and juſt perſons, and σεσόφοι divinely wiſe, he tells us, that "they endure the term of life with reluctance, as a "neceſſary miniſtry to nature, and haſten to get their ſouls at li-"berty from their bodies; and when they appear to be in health, "and have no evil upon them to urge them to it, they freely de-"part out of this life, telling others before-hand of their inten-"tion, who far from hindering them account them happy, and "give them commiſſions to their deceaſed friends. After which "they give up their bodies to the fire, that the ſoul may be ſe-"parated as pure as poſſible from the body, and thus ſinging "hymns they expire (*f*)." This is certainly a great abuſe of a noble principle, the belief of an immortal happineſs in a future ſtate: and it ſhews how apt the beſt and wiſeſt among the Heathens were to fall into great miſtakes in very important points of morality; ſince they who were looked upon as having arrived at an extraordinary degree of wiſdom, purity, and virtue, really committed ſelf-murder, under the notion of an eminent and heroic

(*f*) Porphyr. de Abſtin. lib. iv.

act of piety (*g*). How greatly therefore ſhould it recommend the ſcheme of religion laid down in the holy Scriptures, which at the ſame time that it raiſeth good men to the moſt lively hopes of a bleſſed immortality, and animates them to a patient and chearful enduring the greateſt ſufferings and torments, and even death itſelf, when called to it in a juſt cauſe, and for the defence of truth and righteouſneſs, forbids us to put a voluntary end to our own lives! In this as well as other inſtances it furniſheth us with the moſt exalted idea of true piety and virtue without running into any unwarrantable extremes.

It is true, that there were ſome great philoſophers among the Pagans who did not approve ſuicide. Seneca, even where he

(*g*) Many authors have taken notice of the famous Indian philoſopher Calanus, who voluntarily burned himſelf before Alexander the Great. And the ſame cuſtoms continue among many of the Pagan Indians to this day. We are told concerning the diſciples of Fo in China, that many of them having a diſreliſh for the preſent ſtate of exiſtence, ſeek the means of procuring a better as ſoon as poſſible, by putting an end to their own lives *. The Bramins eſteem thoſe to be heroic and purified ſouls who contemn life and die generouſly, either by caſting themſelves from a precipice, or leaping into a kindled pile, or throwing themſelves under the holy chariot-wheels, to be cruſhed to death, when the Pagods are carried about in proceſſion through the town †. And it is related of the ancient inhabitants of the Canary Iſlands, who worſhipped the ſun and ſtars, that on ſolemn feſtivals kept in honour of the deity they adored, in a temple ſeated on the brink of a mountain, they threw themſelves down into a vaſt depth, out of a religious principle, dancing and ſinging, their prieſts aſſuring them that they ſhould enjoy all ſorts of pleaſures after ſuch a noble death ‡.

* See a tract of a Chineſe philoſopher in Du Halde's Hiſtory of China, vol. III. p. 272. Engliſh tranſlation.
† Xavier's Life, by F. Bouhours, cited by Millar in his Hiſtory of the Propagation of Chriſtianity, vol. II. p. 138. ‡ Millar, ibid. p. 132.

argues

argues in favour of it, acknowledges that there were ſome among thoſe that profeſſed wiſdom, who denied that any violence was to be offered by men to their own lives; and affirmed that it was a wicked thing for any man to be the murderer of himſelf. "In-"venies etiam profeſſos ſapientiam, qui vim offerendam vitæ ſuæ "negant, & nefas judicant ipſum interemptorem ſui fieri (*h*)." Pythagoras taught that a man was placed in a certain watch or poſt, which it was his duty not to deſert without the orders of the great commander, that is God. "Vetat Pythagoras," ſays Cicero, "injuſſu imperatoris, id eſt Dei, de præſidio et ſtatione "vitæ decedere (*i*)." This was alſo the doctrine of Socrates and Plato, as appears from his Phædo. Socrates there obſerves, that the gods take care of us, and that we may be regarded as their poſſeſſion and property; and that as any man would take it ill, if any of his ſlaves ſhould diſpatch himſelf that he might eſcape his ſervice, it is reaſonable to ſuppoſe in like manner that no man ought to depart out of life, till God has laid a neceſſity upon him to do ſo; as he did then upon Socrates. And he there alſo repreſents it, as what was taught in the ἀπόῤῥητα or myſteries, that we are here in a kind of priſon or cuſtody; and that no man ought to break out of it, or run away without a lawful diſcharge (*k*)." And indeed it is not to be wondered at that this doctrine was taught in the myſteries, conſidering that they were under the direction of the civil magiſtrate, and that ſuicide is pernicious to ſociety.

(*h*) Sen. epiſt. 70.

(*i*) Cic. Cato Major, cap. 20.

(*k*) Plato Opera, p. 377. D. edit. Lugd. 1590.

And

And accordingly Virgil, in his ſixth Æneid, which, as a celebrated writer has ſhewn, was probably formed upon the plan of the myſteries, repreſents thoſe that offered violence to their own lives, as in an unhappy condition in the ſubterraneous regions.

" Proxima deinde tenent mœſti loca, qui ſibi lethum
" Inſontes peperêre manu, vitamque peroſi
" Projecêre animas. Quam vellent æthere in alto
" Nunc et pauperiem, et duros perferre labores!"

Æneid. VI. ver. 434, &c.

The Attic laws appointed, that the hand of the ſelf-murderer ſhould be cut off, and that it ſhould be buried apart (*l*). Among the Thebans, thoſe who had killed themſelves were burned with infamy (*m*). The Roman civil laws ordered, that thoſe " qui malâ " conſcientiâ ſibi manus intulerant," ſhould not be lamented by their relations, and that their wills ſhould not be valid. And yet they gave too much allowance to ſuicide: for, as Ulpian has it, " Quod ſi quis tædio vitæ, vel valetudinis adverſæ impatientiâ et " jactatione, ut quidam philoſophi, mortem ſibi conſciverunt, in " ea cauſâ ſunt, ut eorum teſtamenta valeant (*n*)." So that if they killed themſelves through wearineſs of life, or from impatience under ſickneſs, or from a principle of vain-glory, as ſome philoſophers did, they were to be excuſed from the penalty. To

(*l*) Sam. Petit. in Leg. Attic. lib. vii. tit. 1. p. 522.

(*m*) Zenobius ex Ariſtot. apud S. Petit. ibid.

(*n*) Ulpian in Leg. VI. De injuſto, rupto, irrito facto Teſtamento, et Paulus Juriſconſultus in Lege 45. De Jure Fiſci.

which

which the famous lawyer Paulus adds as a reaſon for ſuicide, the ſhame of being in debt, " pudorem æris alieni." That great magiſtrate and philoſopher Cicero ſeems to be not quite conſiſtent with himſelf in what he delivereth upon this ſubject. In the paſſage cited above from his Cato Major, he approves the opinion of Pythagoras. But ſtill more clearly in his dream of Scipio, where he makes Paulus tell Scipio, " Except God ſhall free thee " from the bonds of this body, there can be no entrance for thee " into this place," i. e. into heaven. And he adds, " That there- " fore it was his duty, and that of all pious perſons, to endeavour " to keep the ſoul in the body as in cuſtody, and not to depart out " of this life without his orders who gave us our ſouls, leſt we " ſhould ſeem to have quitted the work and office which God " hath aſſigned us (*o*)." To the ſame purpoſe, in the firſt book " of his Tuſculan Diſputations, Cicero ſays, that God forbids us to depart hence, and to deſert our ſtation, except he commands us to do ſo: but then he adds, that " when God himſelf gives a " juſt cauſe of departure, then a wiſe man may go joyfully out of " his priſon, as if diſmiſſed by law and the orders of the magi- " ſtrate." And this he ſuppoſes to be there the caſe of Cato. This is to give a licence to ſuicide in ſeveral caſes, and leaves it to men themſelves to interpret the circumſtances they are in as an expreſs order from God to deſtroy themſelves; which may be of

(*o*) " Niſi Deus iſtis te corporis vinculis liberaverit, huc tibi aditus patere non " poteſt.—Quare et tibi et piis omnibus retinendus eſt animus in cuſtodiâ corporis: " nec injuſſu ejus, à quo ille eſt nobis datus, ex hominum vita migrandum eſt, ne " munus humanum aſſignatum à Deo defugiſſe videamur." In Som. Scip. cap. 3. Cicer. Oper. Gronov. p. 1408. Lugd. Bat.

pernicious

pernicious conſequence (*f*). In his Offices, ſpeaking of men's acting ſuitably to their different characters, their ſtations, and geniuſes, he ſays, that in conſequence of this, one man may be obliged to make away with himſelf, whilſt another, though like him in other circumſtances, may be obliged to the contrary. And he vindicates Cato's killing himſelf, as what was ſuited to his character, and that it became him rather to die, than to ſee the face of the tyrant (*g*). And in the fifth book of his Tuſculan Diſputations, having ſpoken of death as a ſafe harbour and refuge from all calamities, he declares, that in his opinion "that law "ought to be obſerved in life, which obtained among the Greeks "in their banquets, either let a man drink, or go off and quit "the company.—So (ſays he) when you cannot bear the injuries "of fortune, you may by fleeing from them leave them behind "you."—"Mihi quidèm in vitâ ſervanda videtur illa lex quæ in "Græcorum conviviis obtinet, aut bibat, aut abeat.—Sic injurias "fortunæ, quas ferre nequeas, defugiendo relinquas (*r*)." I ſhall only add one paſſage more. It is in one of his epiſtles, where, writing to his friend Papirius Pætus, he ſeems to plead for it, as in ſome caſes not only lawful but commendable, and praiſes Cato's killing himſelf as a glorious action. "Ceteri quidèm, "Pompeius, Lentulus tuus, Scipio, Afranius, fœdè perierunt: "at Cato præclarè. Jam iſtuc quidem ſi volumus licebit (*s*)."

(*f*) Tuſcul. Diſput. lib. i. cap. 30.

(*g*) De Offic. lib. i. cap. 31.

(*r*) Tuſcul. Diſput. lib. v. cap. 40, 41.

(*s*) Epiſt. lib. ix. epiſt. 18.

This

This is a remarkable inſtance of the uncertainty the ableſt of the Heathen philoſophers were under in matters of very great conſequence: and that even where they had a notion of what was agreeable to right, they were ever varying for want of more certain guidance on which they might entirely depend (*t*).

The ſame uncertainty appears in ſeveral of the moderns, who profeſs to be governed by the law of reaſon and natural religion. Some of them have pleaded for the lawfulneſs of ſuicide. The noted author of the Oracles of Reaſon, Mr. Blount, practiſed it on himſelf: and this practice was juſtified in the preface of that book: though the writer of that preface, Mr. Gildon, afterwards ſaw his error, and retracted it in a book he publiſhed againſt the deiſts, intituled, The Deiſts Manual. Some foreign writers have gone the ſame way. Among the Lettres Perſanes, there is one which is particularly deſigned to apologize for ſuicide. This is alſo the intention of a tract publiſhed in France not long ago, intituled, Queſtion Royale. And in a periodical paper lately publiſhed at Paris, Le Conſervateur, an attempt is made to ſhew that ſuicide is not contrary to reaſon, though it is acknowledged to be contrary to religion. The arguments in theſe and ſome other treatiſes of the like kind are judiciouſly anſwered, and the caſe of

(*t*) The Platoniſts themſelves were not quite agreed with relation to the doctrine of ſuicide. There are ſome paſſages of Plotinus, which ſeem to allow a good man in ſome caſes to put an end to his own life. And even Plato ſometimes expreſſes himſelf in a manner that looks that way. Ficinus, who was well acquainted with the writings of both thoſe philoſophers, and was ſtrongly prejudiced in their favour, leaves it undetermined what were their ſentiments in this matter. Ficin. in Plotin. p. 84.

ſuicide largely conſidered, in the ſecond tome of La Religion Vengée, ou Refutation des Auteurs impies, from lettre 10 to lettre 18. à Paris 1757.

I cannot quit this ſubject, which appears to me to be of great importance, without obſerving, that for a man voluntarily to put an end to his own life, is an act of impiety againſt God, the author of life, and who alone hath an abſolute dominion over us. It is not unfitly compared, as was before hinted, by ſome celebrated antients, to a ſoldier's deſerting his poſt and ſtation, without the leave of his commander or general. Nor can it be pretended, that when we meet with great adverſities in life, it is a call from God to quit it; on the contrary, it is a call to the exerciſe of patience, reſignation, and fortitude. The Author of our beings has ſo conſtituted our bodies, that as it is not in our power to continue in life as long as we pleaſe, ſo neither does it depend upon ourſelves to put an end to it, except by an act of violence to our nature, which it is not lawful for us to commit. If that law of God which commands us not to kill, obliges us not to take away the life of another man by our own private will, without lawful authority, much more does it oblige us not to murder ourſelves when we think fit: ſince the duty of preſerving our own lives is more directly and immediately incumbent upon us than the preſerving the lives of others. And hence the right a man hath to kill another, when it is neceſſary to his own defence. Suicide is alſo contrary to the duties a man owes to the ſociety. It is a miſtake to imagine that any man is abſolutely "ſui juris" at his own diſpoſal. He is not only under the dominion of God the Supreme Lord, to whom

he is accountable, but as a member of ſociety bears a relation to his king, his country, his family, and is not at liberty to diſpoſe of his life as he himſelf pleaſes. If this were the natural right of one man, it would be ſo of another: and ſo every man would have a right to put an end to his own life, whenever he thinks proper, and of this he himſelf is to be the judge. And if he has a right to kill himſelf when any great evil befals him, or when he is under the apprehenſion of it, why might he not have an equal right to kill another who he apprehends has brought evil upon him, or who he fears will do it? And what confuſion this would produce in ſociety, I need not take pains to ſhew. To all which it may be added, that for a man to kill himſelf, becauſe he is under the apprehenſion or preſſure of ſome grievous calamity, is, whatſoever may be pretended to the contrary, inconſiſtent with true fortitude. It is an argument of a puſillanimous ſoul, that takes unwarrantable methods to flee from a calamity; whereas he ought nobly and patiently to bear it, which is true magnanimity and fortitude. The poet ſays well: "It is an eaſy thing to contemn "life in adverſity: he acts a courageous part, who can bear to "be miſerable."

"Rebus in adverſis facile eſt contemnere vitam:
"Fortiter ille facit, qui miſer eſſe poteſt."

Upon the whole, the practice we have been conſidering, and which was juſtified, and in ſeveral caſes even preſcribed, by many of the philoſophers, eſpecially by the Stoics, the moſt eminent teachers of morality among the antients, is a practice deſervedly rendered infamous by our laws, as being a murder committed by

a man upon his own perſon, in oppoſition to the moſt ſacred obligations of religion, and to the rights of the community to which he belongs, and to the ſtrongeſt inſtincts of the human nature, wiſely implanted in us by the Author of our beings, as a bar to ſuch inhuman practices.

The obſervations which have been made are ſufficient to ſhew that the Stoics are not to be abſolutely depended upon in matters of morality. This will further appear from a diſtinct examination of the main principles on which their moral ſyſtem is founded, and on the account of which they have been thought to be the moſt ſtrenuous advocates for the cauſe of virtue, and to have carried their notion of it to the nobleſt height.

CHAP.

CHAP. XII.

The Stoics profeſſed to lead men to perfect happineſs in this preſent life, abſtracting from all conſideration of a future ſtate. Their ſcheme of the abſolute ſufficiency of virtue to happineſs, and the indifferency of all external things conſidered. They were ſometimes obliged to make conceſſions which were not very conſiſtent with their ſyſtem. Their philoſophy in its rigour not reducible to practice, and had little influence either on the people or on themſelves. They did not give a clear idea of the nature of that virtue which they ſo highly extolled. The looſe doctrine of many of the Stoics, as well as other philoſophers, with regard to truth and lying.

THE profeſſed deſign of the whole Stoical ſcheme of morality was to raiſe men to a ſtate of complete felicity. This, indeed, was what all the philoſophers pretended to; and Cicero repreſents this as the principal thing which induced men to ſpend ſo much time and pains in the ſtudy of it (*u*). But none of them made ſuch glorious pretences this way as the Stoics, nor ſpoke of virtue in ſuch high terms as they did. They maintained, that virtue alone, without any outward advantages, is ſufficient to a life of perfect happineſs even in this preſent ſtate. And to ſupport this ſcheme, they aſſerted that all outward things are indifferent, and nothing at all to us: ἀδιάφορα πρὸς ἡμᾶς. Indifferent things, τὰ

(*u*) Cic. de Finib. lib. iii. cap. 3. Et Tuſcul. Diſput. lib. v. cap. 1.

ἀδιάφορα,

ἀδιάφορα, as Laertius repreſents the ſenſe of the Stoics (*x*), neither profit nor hurt us; of this kind are life, health, pleaſure, beauty, ſtrength, riches, honour, nobility; and their contraries, ſuch as death, ſickneſs, pain, deformity, poverty, diſhonour, &c. And again, that thoſe things are indifferent, which are neither good nor evil, neither to be deſired nor ſhunned, conducing neither to happineſs nor unhappineſs. In this ſenſe, all things are indifferent which are between virtue and vice. No philoſopher ever carried the Stoic notion in this matter farther than Epictetus. It is a principle which runs through his whole ſyſtem, and moſt of his magnificent precepts are built upon it, that nothing is good or evil, but what is in the power of our own wills: that none of the things without us are either profitable or hurtful: that neither life nor death, health nor ſickneſs, bodily pain nor pleaſure, neither affluence nor poverty, honour or ignominy, neither the having wife, children, friends, poſſeſſions, nor the want or loſs of them, are to be the objects of our deſires or averſions, they are nothing to us, nor of the leaſt moment to our happineſs.

Agreeable to this is the idea the Stoics give of him whom they call a wiſe man: that he has all his goods within himſelf, wants nothing, never fails of obtaining what he deſires, is never ſubject to any diſappointment; becauſe he never has a deſire or averſion to any thing but what is in his own power; nor can any outward calamity touch him, whether of a public or private nature. And what is eſpecially to be obſerved, they aſſert, that he is perfectly

(*x*) Laert. lib. vii. ſegm. 105, 106.

happy

happy even in the extremity of torments and ſufferings. This is the principle upon which they chiefly valued themſelves, and were admired by others. Cicero repreſents their opinion thus, concerning the wiſe or virtuous man: " That ſuppoſe him to be blind, " infirm, labouring under the moſt grievous diſtemper, baniſhed " from his country, bereaved of his children or friends, in- " digence, tortured upon the rack, he is in that inſtant, and in " thoſe circumſtances, not only happy, but happy in the higheſt " degree (*y*)." And this happineſs they ſuppoſed to be wholly in a man's own power, and entirely owing to virtue itſelf: that it is ſufficient merely by its own intrinſic force and excellence to produce and ſecure an independent felicity, without any foreign ſupport, and abſtracting from all conſideration of a future ſtate or recompence. This was in reality making an idol of their own virtue, and erecting it into a kind of divinity. And accordingly their ſcheme, as was before obſerved, ſometimes betrayed them into a way of talking which bordered upon profaneneſs; as if their wiſe man was equal in virtue and happineſs with God himſelf. The Peripatetics agreed with the Stoics in affirming, that virtue is the greateſt good, and that a wiſe and good man is happy under the ſevereſt bodily torments. But they would not allow, that in that caſe he was moſt happy, or happy in the higheſt degree. Thus it is that Cicero repreſents their ſenſe, in the fifth book of his Tuſculan Diſputations, where he argues pretty largely againſt thoſe who ſuppoſed that a wiſe and good man is " happy"

(*y*) " Sit idem [ſapiens] cæcus, debilis, morbo graviſſimo adfectus, exſul, " orbus, egens, torqueatur eculeo: quem hunc adpellat Zeno? Beatum, inquit, " etiam beatiſſimum." De Finib. lib. v. cap. 28. p. 427. edit. Davis.

in

in ſuch circumſtances, but not " moſt happy:" " beatum eſſe, at " non beatiſſimum (z)." He thinks, that he who wants any thing that is requiſite to an happy life, cannot with any propriety be ſaid to be happy at all: " Si eſt quod deſit, ne beatus quidem " eſt:" that happineſs includes the full poſſeſſion and enjoyment of all good things, without any evil joined to it or mixed with it: and that if any thing relating to the body or outward circumſtances were good, a wiſe man could never be ſure of being happy, becauſe theſe outward things are not in his own power (a). In this the Stoics ſeem to have had the advantage of the Peripatetics. They both agreed that wiſe and good men are happy in this preſent ſtate: for in their diſquiſitions on this ſubject, a future ſtate of happineſs was never brought into the account. They alſo agreed, that this happineſs was in every wiſe and good man's own power. But the Stoics plainly ſaw, that it was not in any man's power to obtain external advantages when he pleaſed, or to attain to a perfect freedom from all outward pains and troubles. And therefore they would not allow that external things are either good or evil, or have the leaſt concernment with the happineſs of human life. This, though contrary to nature and experience, yet was a conſiſtent ſcheme, which that of the Peripatetics was not. Cato, in arguing againſt the Peripatetics, urges, that if they allowed pain to be an evil, it would follow that a wiſe man could not be happy when tortured upon the rack: whereas, according to thoſe who denied pain to be an evil, a wiſe man kept

(z) See particularly Tuſcul. Diſput. cap. 8. et cap. 14. et ſeq.

(a) Ibid. cap. 10. p. 365. edit. Davis.

the

the happineſs of his life unviolated in the ſevereſt torments (*b*). He here takes it for granted on all ſides, that a wiſe man is happy on the rack, and treats it as an abſurdity to ſuppoſe the contrary. And indeed, this ſeems to have been a principle common to all the philoſophers, and it was looked upon as ſhameful to deny it. Hence it was, that Epicurus himſelf, that he might not come behind them in a glorious way of talking, though in his ſyſtem pain was the greateſt evil, aſſerted that a wiſe man would be perfectly happy in Phalaris's bull. Theophraſtus, indeed, one of the moſt eminent of the Peripatetic philoſophers, was ſenſible of the abſurdity of this. He thought, as Cicero informs us, that "great external calamities, pains and torments, were abſolutely "incompatible with a happy life: and that it was a contradiction "to ſuppoſe, that the ſame man could be happy, and oppreſſed "with many evils." Yet, as Cicero intimates, he durſt not ſpeak his mind clearly, and was blamed by all the other philoſophers, for ſeeming to ſuppoſe, though he did not directly affirm, that a wiſe man could not be happy on the rack, or under the ſevereſt torments (*c*). What led the philoſophers in general into this way of talking, was with a view to extol the high advantages of their philoſophy as the only infallible way to make men completely happy, and raiſe them above all outward evils. This is

(*b*) "An verò certius quicquam poteſt eſſe quam illorum ratione qui dolorem in "malis ponunt, non poſſe ſapientem beatum eſſe cum eculeo torqueatur? Eorum "autem, qui dolorem in malis non habent, ratio certè cogit, uti in omnibus tor-"mentis conſervatur vita beata ſapientis." Apud Cic. de Finib. lib. iii. cap. 13. p. 236. edit. Davis.

(*c*) De Finib. lib. v. cap. 26. p. 261. Et Tuſcul. Diſput. lib. v. cap. 9. p. 361. edit. Davis.

the account Cicero gives of what philoſophy makes profeſſion of, that " every man who obeys its dictates ſhall be always armed " againſt the attacks of fortune, and ſhall have in himſelf all the " helps neceſſary to a good and happy life: and finally, that he " ſhall be always happy (*d*)." Such were the glorious pretences of the Pagan philoſophy. Their whole ſcheme was founded on the ſuppoſition of attaining to the perfection of virtue and happineſs in this preſent ſtate: and this involved them in inextricable difficulties, how to reconcile thoſe high pretences with experience, and the preſent appearances of things.

It is manifeſt, that the virtue of the beſt men is at preſent mixed with weakneſſes and defects. Or, if it were never ſo perfect in itſelf, it meets with many obſtacles in a world full of vice and diſorder, and cannot exert itſelf as it would, nor produce the effects it is naturally fitted to produce, and which it would actually produce in a better ſtate of things. Many are the temptations and ſnares to which our virtue is here expoſed, and which it requires a conſtant care and vigilance to guard againſt, as well as to keep all our appetites and paſſions under a perfect ſubjection to the law of religion and reaſon. And as we are united to others by many ſocial ties, their calamities often by a tender ſympathy become our own; and in ſuch caſes and circumſtances, even our virtue and benevolence itſelf, except we caſt off all human affections,

(*d*) " Nam quid profitetur [philoſophia]? O dii boni! perfecturam ſe, qui le- " gibus ſuis pareret, ut eſſet contra fortunam ſemper armatus, et omnia præ- " ſidia haberet in ſe benè beatèque vivendi, ut eſſet ſemper denique beatus." Tuſcul. Diſput. lib. v. cap. 7. p. 357.

will be apt to produce uneaſy feelings. To which may be added, the many hindrances ariſing from the body, its pains, weakneſſes, diſeaſes, and languors; which by the preſent conſtitution of our nature, cannot but greatly affect our minds, and often have ſuch an influence, as to fill the whole ſoul with black and diſmal ideas. And this has frequently happened to virtuous and excellent perſons under the power of an habitual prevailing melancholy. Or, if we put the caſe of a good man's being expoſed to a ſeries of the moſt bitter perſecutions and ſufferings for the cauſe of truth and righteouſneſs, to pretend that in theſe circumſtances he is perfectly happy by the mere force and ſufficiency of his own virtue, without any foreign aſſiſtances or any future hopes, is a viſionary ſcheme, contrary to reaſon and nature. So far is it from being true, that human virtue is of itſelf alone ſufficient to render a man compleatly happy in ſuch circumſtances, that it would not hold true, if ſuch a ſuppoſition could poſſibly be admitted, even with reſpect to the divine nature. That God is perfectly happy is a principle acknowledged by all that believe a Deity. But who would account him perfectly happy, though never ſo perfect in moral excellence, if he were ſubject to pain or external violence, or to thoſe inconveniencies and ſufferings to which good men are liable in this preſent ſtate, and which often by the allowance of the Stoics themſelves, make it reaſonable for them to put an end to their own lives? And indeed there cannot be a more manifeſt proof of the vanity of their pretences than this, that they who profeſſed ſo abſolute a contempt of all external things, and declared in their ſolemn addreſſes to God that they were able to

bear whatſoever he ſhould ſee fit to lay upon them, frequently recommend ſelf-murder as a remedy to free them from external calamities. " It is remarkable," ſays Miſs Carter, " that no ſect of " philoſophers ever ſo dogmatically preſcribed, or ſo frequently " practiſed ſuicide, as thoſe very Stoics, who taught that the pains " and ſufferings which they ſought to avoid by this act of rebel- " lion againſt the decrees of Providence, were no evils. How " abſolutely this horrid practice contradicted all their nobleſt prin- " ciples of reſignation and ſubmiſſion to the Divine Will, is too " evident to need any enlargement (*e*)." Indeed this ſeems to ſhew that their affected contempt of all outward things, was, for the moſt part, little more than a pompous oſtentation of high-ſounding words. Epicurus himſelf, as hath been already obſerved, ſpoke as magnificently of a wiſe man's being happy in the ſevereſt torments, as the Stoics did. It is no hard matter to put on an air of grandeur in the expreſſions. But where there is no proſpect of a future recompence or happineſs, this magnanimity has not a ſolid foundation to ſupport it, or can only have an effect on a very few minds of a particular conſtitution.

The Stoics after all their high taſk of the abſolute indifferency of all external things, found themſelves obliged to make ſome conceſſions which were not very conſiſtent with the rigor of their principles; and which involved them in ſeeming contradictions. Plutarch takes great advantage of this for expoſing them in his two treatiſes of the Contradictions of the Stoics, and of Common

(*e*) See Miſs Carter's introduction to her tranſlation of Epictetus, ſect. 26.

Conception

Conception againſt the Stoics. Cato in Cicero's third book de Finib. after having laid it down as a principle, that that only is good which is honeſt, and that only is evil which is baſe; "Solum eſſe bonum quod honeſtum eſt, et id malum ſolum quod "turpe;" ſets himſelf largely to ſhew, that with regard to other things, which the Stoics would not allow to be either good or evil, or to contribute in the leaſt to render life happy or wretched, there is, notwithſtanding, a real difference between them: ſo that ſome of them were æſtimabilia, as he calls them, that is, fit to have ſome value put upon them, others the contrary; and he poſitively affirms, as what cannot be doubted, that of thoſe which they called middle or indifferent things, i. e. neither good nor evil, ſome are to be choſen or taken, others to be rejected (*f*): and that ſome of theſe things are ſecundùm naturam, according to nature, others are contrary to nature. The ſame account of the Stoical doctrine is given by Laertius (*g*). Cicero obſerves in his firſt book of laws, that what the Peripatetics, and thoſe of the Old Academy, called bona, good things, were called by the Stoics, commoda, commodious or convenient things; what the former called mala, evil things, the latter called incommoda, incommodious or diſagreeable: from which he concludes, that they changed the names of things, when the things themſelves continued the ſame (*h*). And in his fourth book de Finib. he undertakes to

(*f*) "Non dubium eſt, quin ex his quæ media dicimus, ſit aliud ſumendum, "aliud rejiciendum." Apud Cic. de Finib. lib. iii. cap. 18. p. 254.

(*g*) Laert. lib. vii. ſegm. 102.

(*h*) Cic. de Leg. lib. i. cap. 13. et cap. 21.

prove

prove at large, that the Stoics and Peripatetics, if narrowly examined, differed more in the manner of expreſſion than in the thing itſelf (*i*). But the ſame great author ſeems to aſſert in his Offices, that there was a real difference between them, and gives the Stoical ſyſtem the preference to that of the Peripatetics (*k*).

If there was a real difference between the Stoics and Peripatetics, it ſeems to have conſiſted principally in this, that though the Peripatetics allowed, that virtue is the higheſt good, yet they held that the commodities of life, which they called good things, contributed in ſome degree to human happineſs. But the Stoics would not allow that theſe things were of the leaſt moment to happineſs, and aſſerted that with reſpect to the happineſs of life, all outward things were nothing, and of no concernment to us at all. This indeed was neceſſary to ſupport their ſyſtem concerning the abſolute felicity and independency of their wiſe and virtuous man. But it is contrary to nature and experience (*l*). Nor can I well conceive how the Stoics could allow, as they did, external things to be commodious for us, or the contrary, if they had no

(*i*) See particularly de Finib. lib. iv. cap. 6. et cap. 8. et 9.

(*k*) De Offic. lib. i. cap. 24. et lib. iii. cap. 4.

(*l*) Ariſtotle's opinion, which was generally followed by the Peripatetics, was, that though virtue is the greateſt good, yet outward good things are neceſſary to happineſs: for that nature is not ſelf-ſufficient, the body muſt be in health, and men muſt have the neceſſaries and conveniencies of life. See his Ethic. ad Nicom. lib. 10. cap. 9. oper. tom. II. p. 140. C. edit. Paris 1629. et Magn. Moral. lib. 2. cap. 8. ibid. p. 184. D. In this matter Poſidonius and Panætius, two eminent Stoics, quitted the doctrines of their ſect. They denied that virtue alone is ſufficient for beatitude, and affirmed that it requires the aſſiſtance of health, ſtrength, and neceſſaries. Laert. lib. vii. ſegm. 128.

influence

influence at all to promote or to obſtruct human happineſs. Theſe philoſophers themſelves did not pretend to deny, that man is an animal compounded of body and ſoul: and from thence it follows that that which is good or evil for the compound, may be properly ſaid to be good or evil to man in his preſent ſtate. Marcus Antoninus ſays, that "pain is either an evil to the body, "and then let the body pronounce it to be an evil, or to the ſoul: "but the ſoul can maintain her own ſerenity and calm; and not "conceive pain to be an evil (*m*)." But if the body pronounces pain to be an evil, the ſoul as united to the body feels and pronounces it to be ſo. Cato in explaining the doctrine of the Stoics, ſays, "It is manifeſt that we have a natural abhorrence "of pain:" "Perſpicuum eſt naturâ nos a dolore abhorrere (*n*)." And how the Stoics could conſiſtently acknowledge this, and yet not own it to be an evil, or aſſert that men may be perfectly happy under it, is hard to ſee. Cicero obſerves that the Stoics ſaid, that "pain is ſharp, troubleſome, odious, hard to be born, con-"trary to nature," but would not call it evil: and he adds, ſpeaking to Cato, "you deny that any man can have true forti-"tude, who looks upon pain to be an evil: but why ſhould not "that man have as much fortitude, as he that owns it to be "grievous, and ſcarce to be endured, as you yourſelf grant it is? "For timidity ariſes not from names, but from things (*o*)"

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(*m*) Anton. lib. viii. ſect. 28.

(*n*) Cicero de Finib. lib. iii. cap. 19. p. 257. edit. Davis.

(*o*) "Dicunt illi [Stoici] aſperum eſſe dolere, moleſtum, odioſum, contra na-"turam, difficile tolerate. Tu autem negas fortem eſſe quenquam poſſe, qui dolorem

The Stoical maxims muſt be acknowledged to have an air of greatneſs; but they would have done more ſervice to the cauſe of morals, if inſtead of denying that their wiſe or virtuous man ever ſuffers any evil, or is liable to any diſappointment, they had repreſented it as one of the nobleſt exerciſes of virtue to bear evils and diſappointments with a becoming temper of mind. Antoninus indeed argues, that " that which may equally befal a good " man or a bad man, can be neither good nor evil (*p*)." According to this way of repreſenting it, no evil can befal a good man. And this, if true, would at once remove the objection againſt Providence, drawn from the evils to which good men are obnoxious in this preſent ſtate. But except mankind could be perſuaded out their natural feelings, ſuch a way of arguing will be of little force. It is ſtill undeniably true, that good men are often expoſed to great ſufferings and calamities which are very grievous to nature, nor does the refuſing to call them evil at all alter their nature, or render them leſs grievous and troubleſome. The true remedy is not by denying them to be ſo, but by offering ſuch conſiderations as are proper to ſupport the mind under them, the moſt powerful of which are drawn from the hope of eternal happineſs in a future ſtate. But this did not enter into the Stoical ſyſtem.

" dolorem malum putat. Cur fortior ſit, ſi illud, quod tute concedis, aſperum " et vix ferendum putabit? Ex rebus enim timiditas, non ex vocabulis ſequitur." Cicero de Finib. lib. iv. cap. 19. p. 321, 322.

(*p*) Anton. Medit. book iv. ſect. 39.

The

The ſame great emperor and philoſopher ſays, " whenever you " imagine that any of thoſe things, which are not in your own " power, are good or evil to you, if you fall into ſuch imagined " evils, or are diſappointed of ſuch good, you muſt neceſſarily ac- " cuſe the gods, and hate thoſe men who, you deem, were the " cauſes, or ſuſpect will be the cauſes of ſuch misfortunes (*q*)." He frequently expreſſes himſelf to this purpoſe, and ſo does Epictetus. But it by no means follows, that if we look upon any of the things which befal us to be evils, i. e. to be ſeverely troubleſome, painful, and grievous (for this is all that is really meant by calling them evils, ſince no man pretends that they are evil in the moral ſenſe) that therefore we muſt neceſſarily curſe or accuſe God and Providence: for we may upon ſolid grounds be perſuaded, that God ſends thoſe evils upon us, or permits them to befal us, for wiſe ends, and will in the iſſue over-rule them to our greater benefit. And indeed, if we do not look upon them to be evils, there is no proper exerciſe for patience and reſignation, which conſiſteth in bearing evils with equanimity and fortitude. Nor does it follow, that if we regard theſe things as evils, we muſt neceſſarily hate thoſe men, whom we ſuppoſe to be the authors or cauſes of them. We may, and in many caſes cannot help looking upon the injuries we ſuffer from others to be indeed evils and injuries when we feel them to be ſo, and yet we may in obedience to the will of God, and from a prevailing goodneſs of heart, forgive the authors of thoſe injuries, and even render good for evil. This is one of the moſt eminent acts of virtue which is powerfully re-

(*q*) Anton. Medit. book vi. ſect. 41. Glaſgow tranſlation.

commended and enforced in the Holy Scriptures. Whereas upon their ſcheme there is properly no ſuch thing as forgiving injuries, or doing good for evil, ſince a good man cannot be hurt or injured, nor ſuffer any evil: or, if it were a real evil or injury that he ſuffered, he muſt neceſſarily, according to their way of arguing, curſe the man that did it, and accuſe Providence for permitting it.

Some of the Stoical principles were ſo much out of the way of common ſenſe and conception, that when they came into the world, and engaged in public offices and affairs, they could not put in practice their own maxims: but, as Plutarch obſerves, they then ſpoke and acted as if they looked upon external things to be good or evil, and to be things which are of concernment to the happineſs or unhappineſs of human life, he produces a paſſage from Chryſippus, in which he ſays, that a wiſe man will ſo ſpeak in public, and ſo order the common-wealth, as if riches, and glory, and health were good things. And Plutarch very juſtly takes this to be in effect a confeſſing that his doctrine about the abſolute indifferency of all external things was contrary to true policy, and could not be reduced into practice (*r*). There are ſeveral paſſages of Epictetus, by which it appears, that thoſe maxims of the Stoics, which make ſo glorious an appearance in their books, had little influence upon the people, or even upon thoſe philoſophers themſelves. " Shew me, ſays he (*s*), that I " may ſee what I have long ſought, one who is truly noble and

(*r*) Epictet. Diſſert. book ii. chap. 6. ſect. 2.

(*s*) Ibid. chap. 19. ſect. 3.

" ingenuous,

" ingenuous, ſhew me either a young or old man?" The nineteenth chapter of his ſecond book is concerning thoſe who embraced philoſphy only in word. He there ſays; " ſhew me " a Stoic, if you have one.—You can indeed ſhew a thouſand that " can repeat the Stoic reaſonings. Shew me ſome perſon, formed " according to the principles which he profeſſes. Shew me one " who is ſick and happy, in danger and happy, dying and happy, " exiled and happy, diſgraced and happy. Shew him me; for, by " heaven, I long to ſee a Stoic. Shew me one who is approaching " towards this character: do me the favour: do not refuſe an old " man a ſight which he hath never yet ſeen." Here he complains, that he never yet ſaw a true Stoic, one that acted up to their principles. But what he repreſents as impracticable, and no where to be found, the ſeeing a man happy in ſickneſs, danger, exile, diſgrace, and death, was actually verified in many of the primitive Chriſtians. Not that they looked upon theſe things, in the Stoical language, to be perfectly indifferent, and no evils at all; but becauſe they were perſuaded that the *ſufferings of this preſent time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which ſhall be revealed:* and that *this light affliction which is but for a moment worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.* Rom. viii. 18. 2 Cor. iv. 17. Supported and animated by theſe glorious hopes, and by the gracious aſſiſtance of God's Holy Spirit, they *gloried even in tribulation:* They were, as St. Paul expreſſeth it, as *ſorrowful,* yet *always rejoicing*; *troubled on every ſide, yet not diſtreſſed*; *perplexed, but not in deſpair*; *as having nothing, yet poſſeſſing all things*; and performed things which would otherwiſe

have ſeemed impracticable. The reader may conſult the paſſages referred to at the bottom of the page, which are admirable to this purpoſe (*t*).

There is one farther obſervation which I would offer concerning the Stoical doctrine of morals, and that is, that after all the high encomiums which they and others of the antient philoſophers beſtowed upon virtue, and the glorious things they aſcribed to it, they did not give a clear idea of the nature of that virtue they ſo highly extolled. They laid it down as the foundation of their moral ſyſtem, that every animal has a deſire to preſerve itſelf in its natural ſtate: and that the chief good of man, and the proper office of virtue, is to live agreeably and conformably to nature; "congruenter naturæ convenienterque vivere," as Cato expreſſes it in the account he gives of the doctrine of the Stoics (*u*). Laertius gives the ſame account of their doctrine, that the end of man is to live agreeably to nature, ὁμολογουμένως τῇ φύσει ζῆν. This principle that virtue and happineſs conſiſts in living according to nature was common to moſt of the philoſophers. But as they differed in their accounts of nature and what was agreeable to it, ſo they differed in the idea they formed of virtue. The Epicureans, as well as the Stoics, placed virtue and happineſs in living conformably to nature. But as they ſuppoſed the deſire of pleaſure to be the firſt principle of nature in men and all animals,

(*t*) See Matt. v. 11, 12. Acts v. 40, 41. xvi. 25. Rom. v. 3, 4, 5. viii. 17, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39. 2 Cor. iv. 7. 17. 2 Tim. iv. 6, 7, 8. Heb. x. 34.

(*u*) Apud. Cic. de Finib. lib. iii. cap. 5, 6, et 7.

they made every thing elſe ſubordinate to it; and this was the central point of their moral ſyſtem. So it was alſo of the Cyreniacs: but they underſtood pleaſure in a yet groſſer ſenſe than the Epicureans did. Many of the philoſophers, in judging of what is according to nature, took in the brute animals into the account. The Stoics themſelves ſometimes did ſo, and upon this principle ſome of them undertook to juſtify inceſtuous copulations. But for the moſt part the Stoics took nature in a higher ſenſe, and the idea they formed of living according to nature was like the idea of their wiſe man, little conformable to fact and experience. If we judge of the human nature by what it appears to be in its preſent ſtate in the generality of mankind, when they come to the uſe and exerciſe of their reaſon, we ſhall not have a very advantageous notion of it. The nature of man, as it now is, cannot juſtly be ſet up as a proper rule or ſtandard of virtue, but muſt itſelf be regulated by an higher law, by which we are to judge of its rectitude, and of its corruptions and defects. And therefore the ableſt of the Stoics in judging of what is according to nature, were for conſidering the nature of man as in a conformity to the law of reaſon, and the nature of the whole. Diogenes Laertius has mentioned the ſeveral explications given by the principal Stoics, of what it is to live according to nature (*x*). And they ſeem generally to have agreed with Chryſippus, that as our natures are parts of the whole, ſo to live according to nature, or to live virtuouſly, is for a man to live according to his own and the univerſal nature. I think this way of talking is not well fitted to furniſh us with

(*x*) Laert. lib. vii. ſegm. 86, 87, 88.

clear

clear notions. And I believe it will be acknowledged, that it would be of no great advantage to the bulk of mankind to ſend them for direction in their duty to the knowledge of their own nature, and that of the univerſe. And it is what the wiſeſt of the human race, if left to themſelves, could ſcarce attain to, if taken in the extent in which Cato, after the Stoics, explains it. He affirms, that "no man can judge truly of things good and evil, without know-"ing the whole reaſon of nature, and even of the life of the gods, "and whether the nature of man harmonizes or not with the uni-"verſal nature (*y*)." What an extenſive knowledge is here required in order to a man's having a juſt diſcernment of his duty, and paſſing a right judgment on things good and evil! How much more eaſily and certainly might we come to the knowledge of our duty, if it were directly and expreſly determined by a clear revelation from God himſelf!

Another notion, which the Stoics, as well as other philoſophers, advanced of virtue, and which may probably be thought to give a clearer idea of it, is, that they made it equivalent to what the Greeks called τὸ καλὸν, the Latins "honeſtum." And this ſeems to be the notion of it which Cicero principally inſiſts upon, in his celebrated books De Officiis. And he deſcribes the honeſtum to be, "that which is juſtly to be praiſed for its own

(*y*) "Nec verò poteſt quiſquam de bonis et malis verè judicare, niſi omni cog-"nitâ ratione naturæ, et vitæ etiam deorum, et utrùm conveniat necne, natura "hominis cum univerſâ?" Apud Cicero de Finib. lib. iii. cap. 22. p. 267. edit. Davis.

"ſake,

" ſake, abſtracting from all view to profit and reward: which is " not ſo much to be known by this definition, as by the common " judgment of all men, and the ſtudies and practices of the " beſt men, who do many things for this only reaſon, that " it is decent, right, and honeſt, though they do not ſee any " advantage that will follow upon it (z)." He here ſuppoſes the honeſtum to be that which is approved by the judgment of all men, and eſpecially by the wiſeſt and beſt of men as decent and laudable. And I readily acknowledge, that there is a beauty and decency in ſome actions and affections, which, in the common judgment of mankind, are excellent and praiſe-worthy; and that if the human nature was in a ſound and uncorrupt ſtate, this might extend very far, and have a great effect: and even taking mankind as they are, it is undoubtedly in many inſtances of ſignal uſe. But it is manifeſt from experience, and the obſervation of all ages, that the moral ſenſe and taſte is greatly weakened and depraved by erroneous opinions, vicious affections, falſe prejudices, and worldly ſelfiſh intereſts, ſo that it is by no means to be depended upon as a ſafe and univerſal rule in morals. This has been ſufficiently ſhewn in the firſt chapter of this treatiſe. It cannot be denied, that whole nations differ with regard to their notions of what is virtuous, decent, and praiſe-worthy. And whereas Cicero

(z) " Honeſtum id intelligimus, quod tale eſt, ut detractâ omni utilitate, ſine " ullis præmiis fructibuſque, per ſe ipſum poſſit jure laudari, quod quale ſit, non " tam definitione quâ ſum uſus, intelligi poteſt (quanquàm aliquantùm poteſt) " quàm communi omnium judicio, et optimi cujuſque ſtudiis atque factis: qui " per multa ob eam unam cauſam faciunt, quia decet, quia rectum, quia honeſtum " eſt, etſi nullum conſecuturum emolumentum vident." De Finib. lib. ii. cap. 14. p. 122. edit. Davis.

ſeems

ſeems here to refer particularly to the judgment of the wiſe and good, for the knowledge of the τὸ καλον, or honeſtum; what ſhall we think of Zeno, Chryſippus, and others of the principal Stoics, who ſaw no indecency, nothing contrary to the τὸ καλον, or beauty of virtue, in the moſt abominable and unnatural impurities, or the moſt inceſtuous mixtures (*a*), or in the community of women approved by them, by the Cynics, and the famous Plato; or in the expoſing and deſtroying weak and ſickly children, which this laſt mentioned eminent philoſopher, as well as Ariſtotle and others, adviſed and preſcribed; and which was in uſe in many of the beſt policied ſtates? To this may be added, that practice of ſuicide, which the Stoics and others not only allowed, but in ſeveral inſtances recommended and extolled as laudable and glorious.

From the account that has been given of the Stoical ſyſtem of morals, and which is accounted the moſt complete that Pagan philoſophy could furniſh, it appears that it could not be depended upon as a ſufficient guide in moral duty. Beſides the inſtances already mentioned, I ſhall mention one more, which deſerves to be taken notice of; and that is, that many of the philoſophers, and the Stoics among the reſt, were very looſe in their doctrine with regard to truth and lying. They thought lying lawful, when it was profitable, and approved that ſaying of Menander, that a lie is better than a hurtful truth.

(*a*) The ſame may be ſaid concerning the Perſian magi, who were famous among the antients for their wiſdom.

Plato

Plato ſays, he may lie who knows how to do it, ἐν δέοντι καιρῷ, in a fitting or needful ſeaſon (*b*). In his fifth Republic, he lays it down as a maxim, that it is neceſſary for rulers to make uſe of frequent lying and deceit, for the benefit of their ſubjects, σύχνῳ τῷ ψεύδεσθαι καὶ ἀπάτῃ χρῆσθαι (*c*). And in his third and fourth books De Republ. he adviſes governors to make uſe of lies both towards enemies and citizens, when it is convenient. In his ſecond Republic, he allows lying in words on ſome occaſions, but not lying in the ſoul, ſo as to believe a falſhood. And in this he was followed by the Stoics, who held that a wiſe man might make uſe of a lie many ways, ἄνευ συγκαταθέσεως, without giving aſſent to it, as in war, in proſpect of ſome advantage, and for many other conveniencies and managements of life, κατ' ἄλλας οἰκονομίας τὰ πολλὰ (*d*). Maximus Tyrius ſaith, there is nothing venerable, οὐδὲν σεμνὸν, in truth, if it be not profitable to him that hears it. He adds, that "a lie is often profitable or advantageous "to men, and truth hurtful (*e*)." This is one inſtance among many that might be mentioned, ſeveral of which have been already produced, to ſhew how apt they were to miſtake in judging of what is truly venerable, decorous, and laudable, which yet they made one of the principal characters of the τὸ καλὸν, or honeſtum. Plato mentions it as an old ſaying, and which he approves, that that which is profitable is καλὸν, honourable, and that which is

(*b*) Apud Stob. ſerm. 12.

(*c*) Platon. Opera, p. 460. D. edit. Lugd. 1590.

(*d*) Stob. Eclog. Ethic. lib. ii. p. 183. edit. Plantin.

(*e*) Max. Tyr. diſſert. 3. p. 35. edit. Oxon. 1678.

hurtful is baſe, ὅτι τὸ μὲ ὠφελιμὸν καλον, τὸ δ' βλαβερὸν αἰσχρὸν (*f*). Since, therefore, both he and others of the philoſophers held that a lie in many caſes is profitable, they muſt hold that a lie is often καλον, honeſtum. But that excellent emperor and philoſopher Marcus Antoninus, from the generoſity of his nature, judged better in this, as well as ſeveral other inſtances, than moſt of the other philoſophers. He ſays, that a wiſe and good man ſhould ſay and do nothing falſely and inſincerely, διεψευσμένως ἢ μετ' ὑποκρίσεως, that the mind ſhould be juſt, and the ſpeech ſo as never to tell a lie; λόγῳ δὲ μήποτε ψεύσασθαι, and that he who lies willingly is guilty of impiety (*g*). Some of our modern admirers of the law of nature fall far ſhort of that great philoſopher in this reſpect, and ſeem to allow nothing comely or venerable in truth, in itſelf conſidered, but to judge of it merely by profit or convenience (*h*).

I have now finiſhed the enquiry I propoſed into the ſtate of the antient Heathen world, with regard to a rule of moral duty. I have conſidered the doctrine of morals as taught by their moſt eminent legiſlators and philoſophers in thoſe nations which were

(*f*) Plato Republ. v. Oper. p. 459. D, E. edit. Lugd. It is to be obſerved, that Plato there makes uſe of this maxim, to vindicate the women's appearing naked at the public exerciſes, which he looked upon to be decent, becauſe in his opinion it was profitable for the commonwealth.

(*g*) Anton. Medit. book ii. ſect. 17. and book iv. ſect. 33 and 49. and book ix. ſect. 1.

(*h*) See particularly what Dr. Tindal ſays upon it, whoſe doctrine on this head is fully conſidered. Anſwer to Chriſtianity as old as the Creation, Vol. I. chap. vii.

moſt

moſt renowned for learning and knowledge. It might have been expected, that as all the main doctrines of morals are built upon the moſt ſolid grounds, and, when duly conſidered, are agreeable to right reaſon, ſome of thoſe great men would have furniſhed the world with a complete rule of moral duty, which might be ſafely depended upon. But it appears that in fact it was otherwiſe, and that the moſt celebrated of them miſtook or perverted the law of nature in matters of great importance (*i*). I think, therefore, it muſt be acknowledged that Mr. Locke was not in the wrong in aſſerting, that " whatever was the cauſe, it is evident in fact, that " human reaſon, unaſſiſted, failed in its great and proper buſineſs " of morality. It never from unqueſtionable principles, by clear " deductions, made out an entire body of the law of nature (*k*)." The ſame excellent author, who was himſelf a great maſter of reaſon, and far from denying it any of its juſt prerogatives, obſerves, that " it ſhould ſeem by the little that has been hitherto done in it, that " it is too hard a taſk for unaſſiſted reaſon, to eſtabliſh morality in

(*i*) No particular notice has been here taken of the philoſophers of the Alexandrian ſchool, or of the ſacred ſucceſſion, as they were called, who flouriſhed a conſiderable time after Chriſtianity had made its appearance. Some of them had noble notions of morality. But they cannot be properly brought as proofs of what unaſſiſted reaſon can do in morals: ſince it is generally agreed among the learned, that they were acquainted with the Holy Scriptures, and with the doctrines and morals of Chriſtianity, of which they made their own advantage, though they would not acknowledge the obligation. But as to this, I would refer the reader to what has been obſerved in the firſt volume of this work, at the latter part of the 21ſt chapter.

(*k*) See Mr. Locke's Reaſonableneſs of Chriſtianity, in his Works, Vol. II. p. 532. 3d edit.

" all its parts, with a clear and convincing light (*l*)." But whatever be ſuppoſed concerning this, what he afterwards obſerves cannot be reaſonably denied, that " be the cauſe what it will, our " Saviour found mankind under a corruption of manners and " principles, which age after age had prevailed, and muſt be con- " feſſed was not in a way or tendency to be mended.—The rules " of morality were in different countries and ſects different, and " natural reaſon no where had nor was like to cure the defects " and errors in them (*m*)." This could only be effectually done by a Divine Revelation, and how admirably Chriſtianity was fitted to anſwer this excellent end, I ſhall now proceed to ſhew.

(*l*) Mr. Locke's Reaſonableneſs of Chriſtianity, in his Works, Vol. II. p. 532. 3d edit. There is a remarkable paſſage to the ſame purpoſe in an author who has ſhewn himſelf far from being prejudiced in favour of Revelation. Mor. Philoſ. Vol. I. p. 143, 144. I have already cited this paſſage in the Preliminary Diſcourſe, p. 10, 11.

(*m*) Locke, ubi ſupra, p. 534.

CHAP

CHAP. XIII.

The nations were sunk into a deplorable state of Corruption, with regard to morals, at the time of our Saviour's appearing. To recover them from their wretched and guilty state to holiness and happiness, one principal end for which God sent his Son into the world. The Gospel Dispensation opened with a free offer of pardon and salvation to perishing sinners, upon their returning to God by faith and repentance, and new obedience: at the same time the best directions and assistances were given to engage them to a holy and virtuous practice. The Gospel scheme of morality exceeds whatsoever had been published to the world before. A summary representation of the excellency of the Gospel precepts with regard to the duties we owe to God, our neighbours, and ourselves. These precepts enforced by the most powerful and important motives. The tendency of the Gospel to promote the practice of holiness and virtue, an argument to prove the Divinity of the Christian Revelation.

FROM the account which hath been given it appears, that the Pagan nations, even those of them which were most learned and civilized, were sunk about the time of our Saviour's coming into the most deplorable corruption in regard to morals. God had in his wise and good providence done a great deal to preserve among men a sense and knowledge of their duty, but they had neglected and abused their advantages. By the influence of vicious appetites, corrupt habits and customs, and wrong opinions,

opinions, their moral ſenſe and taſte was become greatly depraved. The divine laws which had been originally given to mankind, and the traditions relating to them, were very much obſcured and defaced. What paſſed among them for religion, and which ought to have been the greateſt preſervative to their morals, was amazingly corrupted. Their manifold idolatries, the rites of their worſhip, and the examples of their deities, contributed not a little to the general depravity. The laws of their reſpective countries were by no means fitted to be an adequate rule of morals, and in many inſtances allowed and even preſcribed things not conſiſtent with the purity of religion and virtue. The ſame may be ſaid of their philoſophers and moraliſts: many of them did hurt by their maxims and their examples. The beſt of them were deficient in material points of duty; and they generally countenanced the people in their idolatries, and gave a great looſe to ſenſual impurities. And even where they were right, and gave good inſtructions, their fineſt ſentiments had little weight, and paſſed only for beautiful ſpeculations of this or that philoſopher, but were not looked upon as laws obligatory upon mankind. They had no divine authority to plead, or, if they had pretended it, were not able to produce any proofs or credentials to ſhew that God had ſent them to declare his will.

In this condition the ſtate of things grew worſe and worſe: and at the time when the Goſpel was publiſhed, all kinds of wickedneſs and diſſoluteneſs of manners had arrived to a moſt amazing height. This is repreſented in a very ſtriking manner in the firſt chapter of St. Paul's Epiſtle to the Romans. And the account

he gives is atteſted and confirmed, even with regard to the moſt ſhocking part of the deſcription, the monſtrous and unnatural vices and impurities which prevailed among them, by undeniable teſtimonies of the moſt celebrated Pagan writers, philoſophers, poets, and hiſtorians. The extreme corruption of manners in the Heathen world is repreſented in ſeveral other parts of the New Teſtament. Hence they are ſaid to be " dead in treſpaſſes and " ſins." And St. John gives this emphatical deſcription of their ſtate, " The whole world lieth in wickedneſs (*n*)."

Juſtly might God have left the nations to periſh in their ſins, but in his great mercy he had compaſſion upon them in this their wretched and loſt eſtate. At the time which had been marked out by a ſeries of illuſtrious prophecies, and which was in itſelf the fitteſt, and when the great need men ſtood in of an extraordinary interpoſition in the cauſe of religion and virtue was moſt apparent, it pleaſed God, in his infinite wiſdom and goodneſs, to ſend his own Son into the world to ſave and redeem mankind, and to recover them from their guilty and corrupt ſtate to holineſs and happineſs. God had for a long time ſuffered the nations to walk in their own ways, without making any new and extraordinary diſcoveries of his will to them. But now he commanded all men every-where to repent. The wrath of God was revealed from heaven in the Goſpel againſt all ungodlineſs and unrighteouſneſs of men. The cleareſt diſcoveries were made of the great evil

(*n*) 1 John v. 19. See alſo Eph. ii. 1, 2, 3. iv. 18, 19. v. 6, 7. 11. 12. 1 Pet. iv. 3, 4. 1 Theſſ. iv. 5. and other places to the ſame purpoſe.

of

of thoſe idolatries, that wickedneſs and corruption of all kinds in which mankind were then generally involved. The conſequence of this muſt have been, that when they were thoroughly convinced of the evil of their ways, a ſenſe of their guilt would be apt to fill them with awful thoughts of the divine vengeance juſtly due to them for their manifold offences. It pleaſed God, therefore, in his ſovereign grace and wiſdom, ſo to order it, that the Goſpel Diſpenſation opened with a free and univerſal offer of pardoning mercy. They were aſſured, that upon their returning to God through Jeſus Chriſt, the great Saviour whom he had provided, by a humble faith and ſincere repentance, their paſt iniquities ſhould be forgiven them, they ſhould be received into the divine favour, and admitted to the moſt glorious hopes and privileges. At the ſame time, the moſt holy and excellent laws and precepts were given them for inſtructing and directing them in their duty. And God condeſcended to deal with them in the way of a gracious covenant, which contained the moſt clear and expreſs promiſes of eternal life and happineſs as the reward of their ſincere perſevering obedience. What happy tidings were theſe to a guilty apoſtate world, to creatures ready to periſh in their ſins! And what a glorious diſplay was made of the divine goodneſs and love to mankind!

What the ſubject I am now upon leads me particularly to conſider, is the excellency of the Goſpel morality, as delivered to us in the Sacred writings. The Scriptures of the Old Teſtament are full of admirable precepts and inſtructions relating to the duties which God requireth of man. Theſe had been publiſhed long before,

before, and as the Jews and their Scriptures were generally diſperſed, it is reaſonable to conclude that they were of uſe to many of the Gentiles who had acceſs to them. But the Jews were for the moſt part very unpopular, and kept ſeparate by diſtinct rites and uſages, and their doctors had by wrong interpretations wreſted and perverted the true ſenſe of the law and prophets. And even with regard to ſeveral of the moral precepts, they had, as our Saviour charges them, made the law void by their traditions, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men. One valuable end therefore of his coming with ſuch illuſtrious proofs of his divine authority and miſſion, was to clear the true ſenſe of the law and the prophets, to confirm and eſtabliſh the moral precepts, and carry them to a ſtill higher degree of excellence, and give them additional light and force. As he came to inſtruct men in the right knowledge of God, and the nature of true religion, ſo alſo to ſet before them a complete rule of moral duty in its juſt extent, enforced by all the ſanctions of a divine authority, and by the moſt powerful and engaging motives, and beautifully exemplified in his own ſacred life and practice. To conſider the evangelical ſcheme of morality at large, as it juſtly deſerves, would furniſh matter for a diſtinct volume, and could not well be brought within the compaſs of this work. But it may be of uſe to ſet before the reader a ſummary of it under three principal heads, as relating to the duties required of us with reſpect to God, our neighbours, and ourſelves, which St. Paul expreſſes by our living ſoberly, righteouſly, and godly in this preſent world.

The moſt eminent part of our duty, which is the firſt in order and dignity, and gives a binding force to all the reſt, is the duty we more immediately owe to God. And as a right idea of the Supreme Being lies at the foundation of the duties we owe him, ſo it is not poſſible to form more juſt, more noble, and ſublime ideas of the Deity than are held forth to us in the ſacred writings, both of the Old Teſtament and of the New. All the admirable deſcriptions of the divine nature and attributes, which are to be found in the law and the prophets, do alſo belong to the religion of Jeſus, who hath farther confirmed and improved them. We are taught that there is one only the living and true God, who exiſteth of himſelf from everlaſting to everlaſting: that he is a ſpirit, inviſible to a mortal eye, and who is not to be repreſented by any corporeal form: that he is poſſeſſed of all poſſible perfection, and in him is no variableneſs, neither ſhadow of turning (*o*). That his greatneſs is unſearchable, his underſtanding is infinite, his power almighty and irreſiſtible (*p*). That at the time which ſeemed moſt fit to his own wiſdom and goodneſs he made heaven and earth, and all things that are therein; he only commanded and they were created: that he continually upholdeth all things by the word of his power: and in him all things conſiſt (*q*). That he exerciſeth an univerſal government and Providence over

(*o*) The paſſages of Scripture relating to the Divine Nature and Attributes are too many to be here enumerated, I can only point to a very few. Exod. iii. 14. Deut. vi. 4. Pſal. xc. 2. cii. 26. John iv. 24. 1 Tim. vi. 16. Jam. i. 17.

(*p*) Pſal. cxlv. 3. cxlvii. 5. John xi. 7. xii. 13.

(*q*) Gen. i. 1. 3, &c. Pſal. xxxiii. 6, 7, 8, 9. cxlviii. 5. Nehem. ix. 5, 6. Acts xiv. 15. Col. i. 16. Revel. iv. 11.

all

all the orders of beings which he hath created. And particular care is taken to inform us, that though he be infinitely exalted above our higheſt conceptions, and though it be a condeſcenſion in him to regard the moſt exalted of created Beings, yet his care extendeth to the meaneſt of his creatures. But we are in an eſpecial manner aſſured, of what it moſt nearly concerneth us to know, that his providential care extendeth to the individuals of the human race: that he is the author of all the good things we enjoy, and that all the events which befal us are under his direction and ſuperintendency (*r*). That he filleth heaven and earth with his preſence, and is not far from any of us, ſeeing it is in him that we live, move, and have our being: that all things are naked and opened unto him, and there is not any creature that is not manifeſt in his ſight (*s*).

But above all we are there inſtructed to form right notions of God's illuſtrious moral perfections: that he is infinitely wiſe, and directeth all things in the beſt and fitteſt manner (*t*): and though ſometimes clouds and darkneſs are about him, and we cannot penetrate into the reaſons of his diſpenſations, yet he is righteous in all his ways, and holy in all his works: that he is of invariable faithfulneſs and truth, and that it is impoſſible for God to lie (*u*).

(*r*) Pſal. ciii. 19. Job iv. 18. Pſal. cxiii. 5, 6, 7. Pſal. cxlv. 15, 16. Matth. vi. 26. 30. x. 29, 30. 1 Sam. ii. 6, 7, 8.

(*s*) Pſal. cxxxix. 7—12. Jerem. xxiii. 24. Acts xvii. 27, 28. Heb. iv. 13.

(*t*) Deut. xxxii. 4. 1 Tim. i. 17.

(*u*) Pſal. xcvii. 2. cxlv. 17. cxvii. 2. Tit. i. 2. Heb. vi. 18.

That he is good to all, and his tender mercies are over all his works: and he is continually doing good even to the ſinful human race (*x*). That he is the God, not of the Jews only, but alſo of the Gentiles: and that with him there is no reſpect of perſons, but in every nation he that feareth God, and worketh righteouſneſs, is accepted of him (*y*). The mercy of God towards peninent returning ſinners is frequently declared both in the Old Teſtament and in the New. But it is eſpecially in the goſpel that all the riches of divine grace are repreſented in the moſt engaging manner, and the wonderful love of God towards mankind is moſt affectingly diſplayed in the methods of our redemption and ſalvation through Jeſus Chriſt. And therefore that moſt amiable deſcription is there given of him, that "God is love (*z*)." Yet at the ſame time, that the riches of the divine grace and mercy may not be abuſed as an encouragement to licentiouſneſs, he is every where repreſented in Scripture as infinitely juſt and holy: his goodneſs, as there deſcribed to us, is not ſuch a ſoft indulgence as might encourage ſinners to tranſgreſs his laws with impunity, but is always in conjunction with the moſt perfect wiſdom and righteouſneſs. His juſt diſpleaſure againſt ſin, and the puniſhments he will inflict on obſtinate impenitent ſinners, are repreſented in a ſtriking manner. And we are aſſured that he will judge the world in righteouſneſs, and render to all men according to their deeds,

(*x*) Pſal. cxlv. 9. Matth. v. 45. Acts xiv. 17.

(*y*) Exod. xxxiv. 6, 7. Pſal. lxxxvi. 9. 15. Iſ. lv. 7. Rom. iii. 29. Acts x. 34, 35. 2 Pet. iii. 9.

(*z*) 1 John iv. 8, 9, 10. 16.

not

not merely their outward actions, but the ſecret diſpoſitions of their hearts (*a*).

Such is the idea which is there given us of God and his glorious perfections and attributes: the nobleſt that can be conceived, and the beſt fitted to produce worthy affections and diſpoſitions towards him. And accordingly as in the Goſpel we are inſtructed to form the moſt becoming notions of the Deity, ſo we have the moſt excellent directions given us as to the duties we ſhould render to him.

We are commanded to love the Lord our God with all our heart, and ſoul, and mind, and ſtrength: this our Saviour repreſents as the firſt and great commandment (*b*). And what an amiable idea does this give us of religion, as flowing from and comprehended in this divine principle! It includes our having the higheſt eſteem and admiration of his incomparable perfections, and eſpecially of his marvellous grace and goodneſs: that we muſt rejoice and delight ourſelves in him, and ſeek for our higheſt happineſs in him alone (*c*). That we muſt be animated with a pure zeal for his glory, and muſt prefer the pleaſing and honouring him before the gratifying our fleſhly inclinations, or promoting our worldly intereſts, all which we muſt be ready to abandon when called to do ſo for his ſake, or, which is the ſame thing, for

(*a*) Eccleſ. xii. 14. Acts xvii. 31. Rom. ii. 9, 10. 16.

(*b*) Deut. vi. 5. Matth. xxii. 37, 38.

(*c*) Pſal. xxxvii. 4. lxxiii. 25. Phil. iv. 4.

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the cause of truth, real religion, and righteousness (*d*). Divine love is the source of a holy, ingenuous, delightful obedience. Hence it is declared, that "this is the love of God, that we keep "his commandments (*e*).

But then we are also taught, that this love to God, in order to its being of the right kind, must be accompanied with a holy fear of his Divine Majesty: a temper highly becoming reasonable creatures, towards the supreme and absolutely perfect Being, our Almighty Maker, our Sovereign Lord, and most righteous Governor and Judge. This is of such importance, that the fear of God and real piety are often made use of as terms of the same signification. To serve God with reverence and godly fear is represented as essential to a true and acceptable worship (*f*). And where this prevails, it will be the most effectual preservative against sin and wickedness, it will produce in us the profoundest submission to his divine authority, it will make us afraid, above all things, of offending him, and will raise us above the base and inordinate fear of men (*g*).

It is also required of us, that we exercise a firm trust and confidence in him, and an entire unreserved resignation to his will, from a steady persuasion of his just dominion over us, his power,

(*d*) Matth. v. 10. x. 37.

(*e*) 1 John v. 3.

(*f*) Deut. x. 20. Heb. xii. 28.

(*g*) Prov. xvi. 6. Eccles. xii. 13. Luke xii. 4, 5. 1 Pet. iii. 14, 15.

wiſdom, goodneſs, and all-ſufficiency (*h*). On him we are encouraged to caſt all our burdens and cares, to commit ourſelves wholly to his diſpoſal, and to acquieſce in all his providential diſpenſations, being ſatisfied that he ordereth all things really for the beſt, and will cauſe all events to work together for good to them that love him (*i*).

We are every where taught in Scripture that an habitual regard to God, to his preſence and approbation, muſt influence our whole conduct. This is expreſſed by our walking before the Lord, and walking worthy of the Lord, unto all pleaſing. We are directed to refer all to God; to make it our conſtant care and endeavour to glorify him in the world with our bodies and ſpirits which are his; and are commanded whether we eat or drink, or whatſoever we do, to do all to the glory of God (*k*).

As God is the great original of all perfection and excellence, and his moral attributes are in an eſpecial manner very clearly revealed to us in the ſacred Writings, ſo it is there repreſented as a noble part of our duty to aſpire after a conformity to him in them, as far as he is imitable by ſuch frail creatures as we are. It is required of us that we endeavour to be holy as he is holy, perfect (as far as our limited capacities will allow) as our Heavenly Father is perfect, and to be followers or imitators of God as be-

(*h*) Pſal. lxii. 8. Iſ. xxvi. 4. 1 Tim. vi. 17.

(*i*) Pſal. xxxvii. 4, 5. Pſal. lv. 22. 1 Pet. v. 7. Rom. viii. 28.

(*k*) Gen. xvii. 1. Pſal. cxvi. 9. Col. i. 10. 1 Cor. vi. 20. x. 31.

cometh

cometh dear children (*l*). And for this we have peculiar advantages under the Goſpel, as we have his moral excellencies and perfections, his holineſs and purity, his love andgoodneſs, his faithfulneſs and truth, his condeſcending grace and mercy, moſt beautifully exemplified in his well beloved Son, the unſpotted image of his own excellence. It is then we beſt reſemble God, when the ſame mind is in us that was in Chriſt Jeſus.

With reſpect to the worſhip we are to render to the Supreme Being, we are required to worſhip him who is an infinite Spirit in ſpirit and in truth. The worſhipping falſe gods, and the worſhipping the true God under corporeal images and repreſentations, is moſt expreſly forbidden (*m*). The multiplicity of idol deities which were adored in the Pagan world, whilſt the only true God was neglected, together with the cruel, the impure, and abſurd rites of their worſhip, are rejected. And under the Goſpel we are alſo freed from the various rites and ſacrifices preſcribed in the law of Moſes, which though originally inſtituted for wiſe ends, well ſuited to that time and ſtate of things, yet were burdenſome in the obſervance, and not ſo fitted to that more ſpiritual and perfect diſpenſation which our Saviour came to introduce. There is a noble purity and ſimplicity in the Goſpel-worſhip as repreſented in the New Teſtament; and the ſacred rites and ordinances there preſcribed are few in number, and excellent in their uſe and

(*l*) Matt. v. 48. Eph. v. 1, 2. 1 Pet. i. 15, 16.

(*m*) Exod. xx. 3, 4, 5. Matt. iv. 10. John iv. 24. Gal. iv. 8. 1 Theſſ. i. 9. Acts xiv. 15.

ſignificancy.

ſignificancy. And at the ſame time great care is taken to inſtruct us, that no external rites will be of any advantage or avail to our acceptance with God without real holineſs of heart and life.

As to the ſpiritual ſacrifices of prayer and praiſe, we have both the beſt directions given us in the ſacred Writings, and the nobleſt patterns ſet before us of a pure and elevated devotion. We are there taught to celebrate and adore his tranſcendent excellencies and perfections, as ſhining forth in his wonderful works; and in the revelations of his word, and to give him the praiſe that is due to his great and glorious name (*n*). To him we are directed to offer up our thankful acknowledgments for all the mercies we receive, and our petitions and ſupplications for all the good things we ſtand in need of: which tends to keep up in our minds a conſtant ſenſe of our abſolute dependence upon God, and our great obligations to his goodneſs (*o*). We muſt alſo confeſs our ſins before him with penitent and contrite hearts, humbling ourſelves on the account of them, and imploring his mercy; which is a part of religion juſtly becoming ſinful creatures, and frequently recommended in the Holy Scriptures (*p*).

It is farther to be obſerved, that we are required in the Goſpel to offer up our prayers, and praiſes, and ſolemn acts of devotion

(*n*) See Pſal. ciii. civ. cxlviii. Nehem. ix. 5, 6. 1 Tim. i. 17. vi. 15, 16. Rev. iv. 10, 11. v. 13. xv. 3, 4.

(*o*) Pſal. cvii. cxxxvi. 1 Theſſ. v. 17, 18. Matt. vi. 6—13. vii. 7—11. Phil. iv. 6. Pſal. lxv. 2.

(*p*) Pſal. xxxii. 5. Prov. xxviii. 13. 1 John i. 9.

to God in the name of Jeſus Chriſt, the great Mediator whom he hath in his infinite wiſdom and goodneſs appointed for the great work of redeeming and ſaving mankind. This is the ſtated order of the Goſpel-worſhip (*q*). And the regard we are obliged to have in all things to the Mediator, through whom we have acceſs by one Spirit unto the Father, is a wiſe and gracious proviſion for God's diſpenſing his bleſſings to us in ſuch a way as is moſt becoming his own infinite Majeſty, and the honour of his government and perfections. It tendeth both to impreſs our hearts with a juſt of ſenſe of God's infinite greatneſs and ſpotleſs purity, and of the evil of ſin, which rendereth us unfit to approach immediately to ſo holy and glorious a majeſty; and is at the ſame time excellently fitted to diſpel our guilty jealouſies and fears, and to inſpire us with an ingenuous truſt and affiance in him. For we cannot now reaſonably doubt of God's kind intentions towards us, and of his gracious acceptance of our ſincere though imperfect ſervices, ſince he requires us to offer them to him in the name of his well-beloved Son, in whom he "is always well-pleaſed," who by his wiſe appointment offered himſelf a ſacrifice for our ſins, and who "is able to ſave unto the uttermoſt all them that come unto "God by him, ſeeing he ever liveth to make interceſſion for us (*r*)." The Gentiles had ſome notion of the propriety of applying to God through a Mediator, which perhaps might be owing to ſome remains of an ancient tradition derived from the firſt ages. But this, like other branches of the primitive religion, became greatly

(*q*) John xvi. 23. Col. iii. 17. Eph. ii. 18.

(*r*) Heb. iv. 14, 15, 16. vii. 25. 1 John ii. 3.

perverted and obſcured. As they had a multiplicity of idol gods, ſo alſo of idol mediators: and theſe being all of their own deviſing, without any divine warrant and appointment, ſpread a ſtrange confuſion through their worſhip. They had, as St. Paul expreſſeth it, " gods many, and Lords many," whom they worſhipped and adored: but to us Chriſtians, " there is but one God " the Father, of whom are all things, and we in him; and one " Lord Jeſus Chriſt, by whom are all things, and we by him." And he elſewhere obſerves, that " there is one God and one Me- " diator between God and man, and that Jeſus Chriſt is he (*s*)." And our regard to this great Mediator, inſtead of taking off our regards from God our heavenly Father, tends rather to heighten our reverence of his Divine Majeſty, our love to him, our confidence in him, and to fill us with the higheſt admiration of his wiſdom and goodneſs. For it is he that in his ſovereign grace and love hath appointed his only-begotten Son to be the Saviour of mankind, through whom he communicateth to us the moſt valuable bleſſings (*t*).

Not only doth Chriſtianity give the moſt excellent precepts and directions with reſpect to the duties we more immediately owe to God, but alſo with regard to the duties incumbent upon us towards our fellow-creatures.

(*s*) 1 Cor. viii. 5, 6. 1 Tim. ii. 5.

(*t*) I have elſewhere more largely vindicated the Goſpel doctrine of the Mediator, as highly tending to the glory of God, and the good of mankind. Anſwer to Chriſt. as old as the Creation, vol. II. cap. xv.

Theſe may be ranked under two comprehenſive heads, the doing juſtly and loving mercy; and the precepts delivered to us in the Holy Scriptures, and particularly in the Goſpel of Jeſus, are admirable with reſpect to both theſe. It may be ſufficient to point to a few of them.

It is required of us that we be far from offering the leaſt wrong or injury to others, in their perſons, their properties, or reputations: that we render unto all their dues: that we lie not one to another, but ſpeak every man truth to his neighbour, and provide things honeſt in the ſight of all men. All fraud and falſhood in our words and dealings, and all injuſtice and violence, is moſt expreſly forbidden (*u*). Not only muſt we abſtain from injurious actions, but we are required not to be angry at our brother without a cauſe, to ſpeak evil of no man, and neither to raiſe evil reports ourſelves againſt our neighbour, nor ſpread them abroad when raiſed by others (*x*). We are forbidden to paſs raſh judgments upon others, leſt we ourſelves ſhould be judged of God: on the contrary, we muſt put the beſt conſtructions upon their words and actions which the caſe will bear (*y*). And our Saviour inculcates it in the ſtrongeſt manner, that no ſeeming acts of piety and devotion, or a diligence in the ritual obſervances of religion, will compenſate for the wrongs or injuries done to our neighbours,

(*u*) Micah vi. 2. Levit. xix. 11. 13. 15. 35, 36. Rom. xiii. 7. Eph. iv. 25. 2 Cor. viii. 21.

(*x*) Pſal. xv. 3. Matt. v. 21, 22. Tit. iii. 2.

(*y*) Matt. vii. 1, 2. Rom. xiv. 10. 1 Cor. xiii. 5. 7. James iv. 11.

nor

nor will be accepted of God without making reparation, as far as is in our power for thoſe injuries and wrongs (*z*).

Not only doth the Goſpel forbid the injuring our neighbour in any reſpect whatſoever, but it moſt expreſly binds it upon us as our duty to do good to all men as far as we have ability and opportunity. We are required to aſſiſt them in their neceſſities and diſtreſſes, to ſympathize with them in their afflictions and ſorrows, as well as to rejoice in the good things which befal them, to be ready to diſtribute to them of our worldly ſubſtance for ſupplying their wants, to endeavour to convert them from the error of their way, and to reprove them when guilty of faults in the ſpirit of meekneſs, and finally, to do all we can to promote their welfare ſpiritual and temporal (*a*). Our Saviour the more effectually to ſhew the great importance of the duties of charity and mercy aſſures us, that particular notice ſhall be taken of them at the great day of judgment, and that men ſhall then be rewarded or condemned, according to their abounding in or neglecting the practice of thoſe duties.

And whereas the moſt difficult part of the duty required of us towards mankind relates to the temper and conduct we are to obſerve towards our enemies and thoſe that have injured us, our bleſſed Lord hath given us in this reſpect the moſt admirable pre-

(*z*) Matt. v. 23, 24. xxiii. 23. If. i. 11—18.

(*a*) If. i. 17. lviii. 6—11. Gal. vi. 10. 1 Tim. vi. 18. Hebr. xiii. 3. 16. James v. 20. Gal. vi. 1. Levit. xix. 17. Rom. xii. 15.

cepts

cepts and directions. If we have ſuffered injuries from others, he enjoineth us to exerciſe a forgiving temper towards them, and not to give way to the bitterneſs of revenge. Some of our Lord's precepts to this purpoſe in his admirable ſermon on the mount, are expreſſed in a proverbial way, and not to be urged in the utmoſt rigour; but the deſign of them is obvious and excellent, to ſuppreſs as far as poſſible the motions of a furious and vindictive ſpirit, which hath done ſo much miſchief in the world, and to ſignify to us, that it is better patiently to bear injuries, than to be forward to retaliate them. He hath required us to inſert it in our prayers, that God would forgive us our ſins, as we forgive others the offences committed againſt us. The ſame is the deſign of ſome of his excellent parables. And in this as well as other inſtances the apoſtles taught the ſame doctrine with their divine Lord and Maſter, that we ſhould not avenge ourſelves, that we ſhould recompenſe to no man evil for evil, and inſtead of being overcome of evil, ſhould overcome evil with good (*b*).

This leads me to add, that our Lord not only forbiddeth the rendering evil for evil, but commandeth us to render good for evil. This is the deſign of that glorious precept, whereby we are commanded to love our enemies, to bleſs them that curſe us, to do good to them that hate us, and to pray for them that deſpitefully uſe us and perſecute us. Inſtead of curſing we muſt pray to God for them, not indeed that they may go on and proſper in

(*b*) Rom. xii. 17, 18, 19, 20, 21. 1 Theſſ. v. 15. 1 Pet. iii. 9. Levit. xix. 18.

their

their evil courſes, but that they may be brought to a right temper of mind, and ſo may become the objects of the divine favour: and if they be reduced to diſtreſs, we muſt be ready to aſſiſt and ſerve them in the kind offices of humanity. "If thine enemy "hunger, feed him; if he thirſt, give him drink (*c*)." And this certainly is carrying benevolence to the nobleſt height. And though there have been high pretenders to reaſon who have found fault with it, yet ſome of the moſt eminent among the antient philoſophers, as was obſerved before, have been ſenſible of the beauty and excellency of ſuch a conduct, but they wanted the authority neceſſary to make it a law obligatory on mankind. But in the Goſpel of Jeſus it is more ſtrongly enforced, urged with more powerful motives than ever it was before, and is bound upon us by a moſt expreſs divine authority. To this it may be added, that our Lord hath expreſly condemned that ſpirit, which carries men to perſecute and do hurt to others, under pretence of zeal for the cauſe of God and religion (*d*).

Upon the whole, it is the manifeſt and uniform deſign and tendency of the Goſpel of Jeſus to recommend and enforce an univerſal benevolence. It lays the foundation of the duties we owe to mankind in love. It is there given as a comprehenſive ſummary of the duties we owe to mankind: "Thou ſhalt love "thy neighbour as thyſelf (*e*)." And by our neighbour we are

(*c*) Matt. v. 43, 44. Rom. xii. 20. Prov. xxv. 21.

(*d*) Luke ix. 54, 55, 56.

(*e*) Matt. xxii. 39. Rom. xiii. 8, 9. Jam. ii. 8. Levit. xix. 18.

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taught to underſtand not merely thoſe of the ſame country, nation, and religion with ourſelves, but all of the human race that ſtand in need of our kindneſs, and to whom we have an opportunity of doing good. This is beautifully exemplified by our Saviour, in the parable of the good Samaritan (*f*). To which may be added, that other remarkable precept, " Whatſoever ye " would that men ſhould do unto you, do ye even ſo to them (*g*)." A rule which, if rightly conſidered, would be of great uſe in regulating our conduct towards our fellow-creatures.

But though we are required to love and do good to all men, the deſign is not, as ſome who are deſirous to impeach the Goſpel morality would inſinuate, that we ſhould have the ſame degree of affection for all. The ſpecial love and eſteem which good men ſhould have for one another, and the peculiar ties by which they are united, additional to the common ties of humanity, are recommended and enforced in the ſtrongeſt and moſt engaging manner, and lay the propereſt foundation for all the intimacies of ſacred friendſhip (*h*).

Beſides the general precepts, preſcribing the duties of juſtice and benevolence towards all mankind, there are alſo particular injunctions given us with reſpect to the duties incumbent upon us in

(*f*) Luke x. 33, 34, 35.

(*g*) Matt. vii. 12.

(*h*) John xiii. 34, 35. Gal. vi. 10. Eph. iv. 1—6. Phil. ii. 1—5. 1 Pet. i. 22. 1 John iii. 16.

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the ſeveral ſtations and relations we bear in the civil and ſocial life. And theſe are of great importance to the welfare of nations, families, and particular perſons. The duties of princes, magiſtrates, and ſubjects, are excellently repreſented, every way ſufficient, if duly attended to, to preſerve the good order and welfare of ſociety. It is required, that they that rule over men be juſt, ruling in the fear of God. Kings and all in authority are taught to conſider themſelves as under the dominion of the great and univerſal Sovereign, the King of kings and Lord of lords, to whom they muſt be accountable for their conduct, who hath appointed them for the good of the people over whom he hath placed them, that they may adminiſter juſtice and judgment without reſpect of perſons, and be a terror not to good works, but to the evil (*i*). Subjects are taught to be ſubmiſſive and obedient to the higher powers, to pray for them, to fear God and honour the king, to give unto Cæſar the things which are Cæſar's, to render tribute to whom tribute is due, cuſtom to whom cuſtom, fear to whom fear, honour to whom honour; and to do all this, not merely becauſe the civil laws require it, and for fear of puniſhment from men, but for conſcience ſake, and in obedience to the laws of God (*k*). In like manner it is urged as a neceſſary part of religion, for ſervants to obey and ſerve their maſters, with all proper reſpect, fidelity, and diligence, not purloining, not anſwering again, with good-

(*i*) Deut. i. 16, 17. 2 Sam. xxiii. 3. 2 Chron. xix. 6, 7. Pſal. lxxxv. 1—4. Prov. xx. 26—28. xxix. 11. 14. Eccleſ. v. 8. Rom. xiii. 3, 4. 1 Pet. ii. 13, 14, 15.

(*k*) Matt. xxii. 21. Rom. xiii. 1, 2. 5, 6, 7. 1 Tim. ii. 2. Tit. iii. 1. 1 Pet. ii. 13, 14.

will doing ſervice as unto the Lord, and not unto men, knowing that whatſoever good thing any man doth, that ſhall he receive of the Lord, whether he be bond or free. Theſe things, when really believed, and duly conſidered, will have a much ſtronger influence to engage them to a faithful and chearful diſcharge of their duty, than mere cuſtom, or the laws of the country. On the other hand, maſters are required to give unto their ſervants that which is juſt and equal, forbearing threatenings, knowing that they alſo have a Maſter in heaven, and that with him there is no reſpect of perſons (*l*). The duties of huſbands and wives are alſo admirably deſcribed, and enforced by motives proper to the Chriſtian diſpenſation, additional to thoſe drawn from the law of nature and reaſon (*m*). The ſame thing may be ſaid of the duties of parents and children (*n*). In like manner, ſuperiors and inferiors, the elder and younger, the rich and the poor, are directed to a proper conduct towards one another: and rules are given which tend to regulate the deportment of equals among themſelves, that they ſhould be courteous, in honour preferring one another, not willingly giving offence to any, and endeavouring as far as poſſible to live peaceably with all men (*o*). In a word, all the various offices of humanity, juſtice, and charity, due from one man to another, are frequently deſcribed in the Sacred Writ-

(*l*) Eph. vi. 5—9. Col. iii. 22—25. iv. 1. 1 Tim. vi. 1, 2. Tit. ii. 9, 10, 11. Deut. xxiv. 14, 15. Job xxxi. 13, 14, 15.

(*m*) Eph. v. 22—33. Col. iii. 18, 19. Tit. ii. 4, 5. 1 Pet. iii. 1—8.

(*n*) Exod. xx. 16. Eph. vi. 1—4. Col. iii. 20, 21. 1 Tim. v. 4—8.

(*o*) Rom. xii. 10. 16. 18. 1 Cor. x. 32. Phil. ii. 3. 1 Pet. ii. 17. iii. 8. v. 5.

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ings, enforced by the moſt powerful motives, and by the authority of God himſelf, which, where it is firmly believed, muſt come with greater force upon the conſcience than the mere inſtitutions of human legiſlators, or the reaſonings of philoſophers and moraliſts.

Theſe hints may give us an idea of the excellency of the Scripture precepts with reſpect to that part of morality which relates to the duties we owe to mankind.

As to that part of our duty which relates more immediately to ourſelves, to the governing our affections, appetites, and paſſions, and to the due regulation and improvement of our own temper, the Goſpel law is peculiarly excellent. With regard to the angry paſſions, wrath, hatred, and revenge, it hath been already ſhewn, that great care is taken to reſtrain and moderate their exorbitances, and to engage men to exerciſe meekneſs, forbearance, and long-ſuffering; and above all, to cultivate that friendly temper and univerſal benevolence, which is one of the moſt excellent and amiable diſpoſitions of the human mind (*p*). As to the concupiſcible and voluptuous appetites and paſſions, theſe at the time of our Saviour's coming into the world had broken over all bounds, and had introduced an univerſal corruption and diſſoluteneſs of manners. One excellent deſign, therefore, of the Chriſtian law, was to mortify and ſubdue the fleſhly concupiſcence, and to deliver men from their baſe ſervitude to the luſts of uncleanneſs, which, where they

(*p*) Eph. iv. 26, 27. 31, 32. Col. iii. 12, 13, 14. 1 Cor. xiii. 4, 5.

obtain the dominion, diſhonour and defile our nature, and are of the moſt pernicious conſequence to the intereſts of religion and virtue. The Goſpel, where-ever it is ſincerely believed and embraced, inſpires the utmoſt abhorrence of thoſe unnatural luſts and impurities, which had made ſo monſtrous a progreſs in the moſt civilized parts of the Heathen world, and which, as hath been ſhewn, were abetted and countenanced by the maxims and practices of their wiſe men and philoſophers (*q*). All manner of uncleanneſs and laſciviouſneſs is forbidden; not adultery only, but fornication alſo (*r*), which among the Pagans paſſed for no fault at all, or a very ſlight one. Polygamy and divorces upon ſlight occaſions, which had been greatly abuſed among the Jews, for gratifying their corrupt luſts, are not allowed in the religion of Jeſus. And not only are the outward groſs acts of uncleanneſs forbidden, but even the cheriſhing and indulging impure and vicious inclinations, which are repreſented as criminal in the ſight of God (*s*).

We are alſo frequently warned againſt rioting and drunkenneſs, gluttony and intemperance, which likewiſe tend greatly to debaſe

(*q*) 1 Cor. vi. 9, 10. 1 Tim. i. 9, 10. And theſe abominations are alſo condemned in the ſtrongeſt manner in the Old Teſtament.

(*r*) See what St. Paul ſaith to this purpoſe, 1 Theſſ. iv. 3, 4, 5. 7. which I have cited above, p. 135. And whoſoever impartially conſiders what the ſame great apoſtle hath ſaid concerning it, 1 Cor. vi. from ver. 13. to ver. 20. will find ſeveral conſiderations there urged, which are of the higheſt moment, and far ſuperior to any thing that can be found in the moſt refined of the Pagan moraliſts. See alſo Prov. vi. 5—11.

(*s*) Matt. v. 27, 28.

and

and diſhonour our nature. And what ought eſpecially to be obſerved, Chriſt and his apoſtles urge their exhortations againſt the ſeveral kinds of fleſhly luſts which have been mentioned, not merely from the many evil conſequences they bring along with them in this preſent ſtate, but, which is of far greater force, from the expreſs authority and command of God, from the ſtrict account we muſt give of the things done in the body at the day of judgment, and the terrors of the wrath to come (*t*). They are alſo repreſented as peculiarly inconſiſtent with the dignity and privileges to which we are called by the Goſpel, and as altogether unworthy of thoſe who have the honour of being the children of God, the members of Chriſt, the living temples of God and his Holy Spirit, and the heirs and expectants of the heavenly inheritance (*u*). But it is the great praiſe of Chriſtianity, as delivered in the Goſpel, that though chaſtity, purity, and temperance is there bound upon us by the moſt ſacred obligations, yet care is taken to guard againſt ſuperſtitious extremes. Neither our Saviour nor his apoſtles, under pretence of extraordinary purity, forbid and condemn marriage, as ſome of the Eſſenes then did, and as others by a falſe refinement have ſince done. On the contrary, it is declared, that "marriage is honourable in all, and the "bed undefiled (*x*)." And though all intemperance and exceſs is expreſly forbidden, and we are required to keep the body under,

(*t*) Luke xxi. 34. Gal. v. 19. 21. Eph. v. 6. 1 Pet. iv. 3, 4, 5. See alſo Prov. xxiii. 1, 2, 3. 20, 21. 29—35. Iſ. v. 11, 12.

(*u*) Rom. xiii. 12—14. 1 Cor. vi. 13. 19, 20. Eph. v. 18. 1 Theſſ. v. 5—8.

(*x*) 1 Cor. vii. 9. Heb. xiii. 4.

yet

yet we are allowed the moderate uſe of ſenſible enjoyments; and it is declared, that every creature of God is good, and nothing to be refuſed, if it be received with thankſgiving, for it is ſanctified by the word of God and prayer (*y*).

It is another inſtance of the excellency of the Goſpel precepts, that particular care is taken to guard us againſt an immoderate paſſion for worldly riches. Our Saviour frequently takes occaſion to ſhew the great folly of placing our confidence and happineſs in ſuch things as theſe, and repreſents in ſtrong terms the inconſiſtency of a predominant love of worldly wealth with the love of God, and with real piety and virtue (*z*). The poſſeſſion and enjoyment of riches is not abſolutely forbidden; but we are directed to make a proper uſe of them, and to regard them as a truſt committed to us by God, of which we are only the ſtewards, and for which we muſt be accountable; we are taught to employ them not as incentives to luxury, but as opportunities of doing good, of honouring God, and being uſeful to mankind: and we are aſſured for our encouragement, that riches ſo employed will recommend us to the divine favour, and open a way for us to everlaſting happineſs in the world to come (*a*).

Pride is frequently repreſented in Scripture as a very wrong temper of mind, and highly diſpleaſing in the ſight of God (*b*).

(*y*) 1 Tim. iv. 3, 4, 5.

(*z*) Matt. vi. 24. x. 24. Luke xii. 15—21. 1 Tim. vi. 9, 10. See alſo Pſal. xxxvii. 16. lxii. 10. Prov. xi. 28. xxiii. 4, 5. xxviii. 20.

(*a*) Luke xvi. 9, 10. 1 Tim. vi. 17, 18, 19.

(*b*) Prov. viii. 13. xvi. 5. Jam. iv. 6.

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Many paſſages in the Goſpel are particularly deſigned to correct and ſubdue it in all its various branches and appearances, whether as it ſignifies an inordinate ambition which puts men upon contending who ſhould be greateſt, or an eager thirſt after the applauſe of men rather than the favour and approbation of God, or a preſumptuous haughty arrogance, and a high conceit of ourſelves and our own righteouſneſs, and a contempt of others: never was an amiable humility recommended and enforced in ſuch an engaging manner as by our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, who alſo gave the moſt perfect and lovely pattern of it in his own example (*c*).

It is the deſign of ſeveral of our Saviour's precepts to inſtruct and direct us to poſſeſs our ſouls in patience, equanimity, and contentment. As nothing tends more to diſcompoſe and diſturb the mind than anxious cares, or exceſſive ſorrows and deſponding fears, the Goſpel provides the moſt effectual remedies againſt all theſe: not by repreſenting worldly evils and calamities as no evils at all, or preſcribing an unfeeling apathy, and ſuppreſſing the natural affections and paſſions, but by keeping them within proper bounds. No where are there ſuch powerful conſiderations for ſupporting us under afflictions and adverſities with a calm reſignation and a lively hope. We are taught to regard them as ſent by God for the wiſeſt and beſt purpoſes, and are aſſured that he will graciouſly ſupport us under them, and over-rule them to our greater benefit, and that if duly improved they ſhall iſſue in

(*c*) Matt. xxiii. 6—12. Mark ix. 33, 34, 35. Luke xviii. 9—14. John v. 44. Matt. xi. 29. John xiii. 12—17. Phil. ii. 3—7. 1 Pet. v. 5.

a complete everlaſting felicity (*d*). Nothing can poſſibly be better fitted to deliver us from anxious diſtracting cares and ſolicitudes, and a diſtruſtful thoughtfulneſs for to-morrow, than the excellent precepts and directions given us by our Saviour and his apoſtles (*e*). But though we are directed to caſt our cares upon God in a chearful and ſteady dependence upon his wiſe and good Providence, yet we are cautioned not to neglect the uſe of proper means and endeavours on our parts. It is urged as our duty not to be ſlothful in buſineſs, to exerciſe ourſelves with diligence in the work of our ſeveral callings and employments, that we may have lack of nothing, and may have to give to him that needeth. Thoſe who lead idle lives are repreſented as walking diſorderly, and it is declared, that if any man will not work, neither ſhould he eat (*f*). To this it may be added that our Saviour's precepts and inſtructions are admirably fitted to inſpire us with a true divine fortitude, and to raiſe us above the ſlaviſh fear of men, who can only kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do, or of any worldly evils and ſufferings. And yet he is far from encouraging a forward enthuſiaſtic raſhneſs: he directeth his diſciples not needleſsly to expoſe themſelves to dangers, but to take all proper precautions for avoiding the rage and malice of their perſecutors (*g*): but when this could not be done, without be-

(*d*) Matt. v. 4. Rom. v. 4, 5. viii. 18. 28. 2 Cor. iv. 17. Heb. xii. 5—12. Pſal. lv. 22. Pſal. ciii. 9, 10. 13, 14. Lam. iii. 31, 32, 33.

(*e*) Matt. vi. 25—34. Luke xii. 22—31. Phil. iv. 6. 11, 12. 1 Tim. vi. 6. 8. Heb. xiii. 5. 1 Pet. v. 7.

(*f*) Rom. xii. 11. Eph. iv. 28. 1 Theſſ. iv. 11, 12. 2 Theſſ. iii. 10, 11, 12.

(*g*) Matt. vii. 6. x. 16. 23.

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traying the cauſe of God, of truth and righteouſneſs, they were to exert a noble fortitude, and to endure the greateſt ſufferings with conſtancy and even with joy, being aſſured of divine ſupports, and that great ſhould be their reward in heaven (*h*).

As knowledge is one of the nobleſt improvements of the mind, and of mighty advantage to a life of piety and virtue, it is frequently urged upon us as our duty, to endeavour to get our minds furniſhed with divine and uſeful knowledge. And the knowledge there required is not merely of the ſpeculative notional kind or ſcience falſely ſo called, but ſuch a knowledge of thoſe things which are of the higheſt importance to our happineſs, as may help us to make a progreſs in all holineſs and goodneſs; we muſt endeavour to grow in wiſdom and ſpiritual underſtanding, ſo as to diſcern the things which are excellent, and to prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God (*i*).

It is proper farther to obſerve, that, as the foundation of all the virtues which have been mentioned, and of the right ordering of ourſelves, we are directed to endeavour to get our hearts purified. Our Saviour repreſents the heart as the fountain, from whence good or evil thoughts, words, and actions flow. And therefore one principal part of the work required of us is to exerciſe a proper diſcipline over the heart, and to maintain a conſtant

(*h*) Matt. v. 10, 11, 12. Luke xii. 4, 5. 1 Pet. iii. 14. iv. 12, 13.

(*i*) John xvii. 3. Phil. i. 9, 10. Rom. xii. 2. Eph. v. 17. Col. i. 9, 10. 1 Theſſ. v. 21. Tit. i. 1. Prov. ii. 3, 4, 5.

watch, not only over our outward conduct and deportment, but over our inward frame and temper. We must not take up with any thing short of a real universal purity and sanctity of soul, that truth in the inward parts, that simplicity and godly sincerity, free from all hypocrisy and guile, without which the most pompous external services are of no avail in the sight of God (*k*). Finally, it is required of us, that we make it our continual endeavour to grow in grace, and in every divine virtue. And in order to this we must live and walk by faith, "which is the substance of "things hoped for, and the evidence of things not seen." And as that future life and immortality is now brought into the most clear and open light, we are required to carry our desires and views beyond this transitory world, and all its enjoyments, and to seek the things which are above, and place our choicest affections there (*l*). Accordingly the Christian life is represented under the noble notion of a conversation with heaven, and communion with the Father, and with his son Jesus Christ: it is a continual aspiring towards the perfection of our nature in a conformity to the divine goodness and purity, and an endeavour to do the will of God on earth, as it is done in heaven (*m*).

To all which may be added, that it is the distinguishing character of the religion of Jesus, that at the same time that it di-

(*k*) Prov iv. 23. Matt. xxiii. 26. 2 Cor. i. 12. Eph. iv. 21—24. 1 Pet. ii. 1, 2. John iii. 3. 6. 2 Cor. v. 17. Rom. ii. 28, 29. Gal. vi. 15.

(*l*) 2 Cor. v. 17. Col iii. 1, 2. Heb. xiii. 14.

(*m*) Phil. iii. 20. 1 John i. 3. Phil. iii. 12, 13, 14.

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recteth us to aſpire to the higheſt degree of moral excellence, it teacheth us to maintain a conſtant ſenſe of our own weakneſſes and defects, and of our inſufficiency in ourſelves. In the Goſpel all boaſting and confidence in our own righteouſneſs and merits is excluded: and we are inſtructed to place our whole dependence upon the grace of God in Jeſus Chriſt our Lord, giving him the glory of every good thing that is in us, or which we are enabled to perform.

Upon this general view of the Goſpel precepts, it appears that they are of a moſt excellent nature and tendency: they exhibit a beautiful harmonious ſcheme of practical religion. The beſt ſyſtems of the moſt celebrated Pagan moraliſts are in ſeveral reſpects deficient, and in ſome very wrong; but here there is nothing deficient, our whole duty is ſet before us in its juſt extent, without the leaſt mixture of any thing that is wrong. But though it ſets before us the nobleſt idea of moral excellence, it does not carry it to any unwarrantable extremes, or to a degree of ſtrictneſs unſuitable to the human nature: which is an objection that ſome have made againſt it. We are indeed there taught to deny ourſelves, but the intention is only that we ſhould endeavour to keep the inferior appetites and paſſions in a due ſubjection to the nobler part of our natures, and that the pleaſures and intereſts of the flesh and of the world ſhould be made to give way to the duty we owe to God, and to the love of truth, virtue, and righteouſneſs, whenever they happen to ſtand in competition; in which caſe our temporary ſelf-denial ſhall be crowned with the

moſt glorious rewards. We are required not to make proviſion for the fleſh to fulfil the luſts thereof; but neither our Saviour nor his apoſtles have urged it upon us as a duty to macerate our bodies with thoſe unnatural and exceſſive rigors and auſterities, or to chaſtiſe them with that bloody diſcipline, which ſuperſtition hath often enjoined under pretence of extraordinary mortification and devotion. We are to be heavenly-minded, and to ſet our affections upon the things which are above, yet ſo as not to neglect the duties and offices incumbent upon us in this preſent ſtate. We are not commanded abſolutely to quit the world; but, which is a much nobler attainment, to live above the world whilſt we are in it, and to keep ourſelves free from its pollutions; not wholly to renounce our preſent enjoyments, but to be moderate in the uſe of them, and ſo " to uſe this world as not to " abuſe it." Finally, the Goſpel Morality takes in all that is included in that comprehenſive precept, " whatſoever things are " true, whatſoever things are venerable, σέμνα, whatſoever things " are juſt, whatſoever things are pure, whatſoever things are " lovely, whatſoever things are of good report, if there be any " virtue, and if there be any praiſe, think on theſe things." Phil. iv. 8.

But let a rule of moral duty be never ſo complete and excellent in itſelf, it will hardly be ſufficient to anſwer the end in the preſent ſtate of mankind, unleſs it be bound upon us by a proper authority, and enforced by the moſt powerful motives. And in this the religious and moral precepts of the Goſpel have a vaſt advantage

advantage (*n*). They are not to be regarded as the mere counſels and dictates of wiſe men and moraliſts, who can only adviſe and endeavour to perſuade, but cannot pretend to a proper authority over mankind; nor as the injunctions of fallible human legiſlators armed with civil authority, who cannot pretend to judge of the heart, or of mens inward diſpoſitions, and who have nothing farther in view than the external order and welfare of ſociety, and frequently make the rules of morality give way to their political intereſts; but they are urged upon us as the command of God himſelf, the ſovereign Lord of the univerſe, who knoweth our moſt ſecret thoughts, and to whom we muſt give an account, not only of our outward actions, but of the inward affections and diſpoſitions of our ſouls.

Another great advantage is, that our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, who was ſent into the world to publiſh theſe excellent laws of God to mankind, and hath given us the moſt illuſtrious proofs of his divine miſſion, hath himſelf exemplified thoſe laws and precepts to us in his own ſacred life and practice. Examples have uſually a greater force than bare precepts. And what example ſo proper and engaging as that of the Son of God in human fleſh, the moſt perfect image of the inviſible Deity, in whom the divine perfections are brought nearer to our view, and within the reach of our imitation? In him we may behold a moſt complete pattern of

(*n*) Lord Bolingbroke himſelf ſeems to acknowledge, that the Chriſtian Revelation may be of uſe to enforce the practice of morality by a ſuperior authority. See his works, Vol. V. p. 294. edit. 4to.

univerſal holineſs and ſpotleſs purity, of the moſt ardent love to God, the moſt wonderful love to mankind, the moſt perfect obedience and reſignation to the divine will, the moſt exemplary patience under the greateſt ſufferings, the moſt admirable humility, meekneſs, and condeſcenſion, and of every amiable virtue. And ſhould not we be deſirous to tread in his illuſtrious footſteps? and to live and act as ſo glorious and divine a perſon, to whom we are under ſuch infinite obligations, lived and acted before us?

It tends farther to recommend and enforce the precepts of the Goſpel, that all the charms of the divine grace and goodneſs are here opened to our view. Motives to obedience drawn from love are fitted to work upon the beſt principles of our nature. And never was there ſuch a diſplay of the wonderful love of God to mankind as in the methods of our redemption and ſalvation by Jeſus Chriſt. Where this myſtery of godlineſs is heartily received with a true and living faith, it will have a happy influence to engage and draw us to a holy and dutiful obedience: ſince it is every where inculcated in the goſpel that the deſign of God's ſending his own Son into the world, and of all the great things which have been done for us, is to oblige us to die more and more unto ſin, and to live unto righteouſneſs.

The excellent privileges of the Goſpel do alſo, as was before hinted, furniſh very powerful motives to a holy and virtuous practice. For this purpoſe we are called to be ſaints, honoured to be the members of Chriſt's church and kingdom, the children of

of God, and heirs of the heavenly inheritance, that we may be a people zealous of good works, ſhewing forth the praiſes and virtues of him that hath called us out of darkneſs into his marvellous light.

To all which may be added the important motives drawn from the rewards and puniſhments of a future ſtate, of which the Goſpel exhibits far clearer diſcoveries, and gives fuller aſſurances, than were ever given to the world before, as will be ſhewn in the following part of this work.

Finally, for our greater encouragement, divine aſſiſtances are provided for us. This is a conſideration of great moment, as every one muſt acknowledge that has a due ſenſe of the weakneſs and corruption of the human nature in its preſent ſtate, and the manifold temptations to which we are here expoſed. We are not left merely to our own unaſſiſted ſtrength, but have the moſt expreſs promiſes and aſſurances given us in the Goſpel, that God will ſend his Holy Spirit to enlighten and ſanctify us, to ſtrengthen and aſſiſt us in the performance of our duty, if from a ſenſe of our own inſufficiency in ourſelves we humbly apply to him for his gracious aſſiſtances, and at the ſame time are diligent in the uſe of all proper means and endeavours on our parts. For it muſt be conſidered, that thoſe divine influences and aids are communicated in ſuch a way as is agreeable to the juſt order of our rational faculties, and not ſo as to render our own endeavours needleſs, but to aſſiſt and animate our endeavours.

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Upon the whole, conſidering the great darkneſs and corruption into which mankind had fallen, nothing was more wanted, than to have a pure ſyſtem of morals, containing the whole of our duty in its juſt extent, delivered in plain and expreſs precepts, as the laws of God himſelf, enforced by all the ſanctions of a divine authority, and by all the charms of the divine love and goodneſs; and this is fully done by the Goſpel of Jeſus.

It is a natural inference from what hath been offered on this ſubject, that the admirable purity of the Goſpel morals, and the uniform tendency of the Chriſtian doctrines, precepts, privileges, and ordinances, to promote real holineſs of heart and life, furnitheth a very convincing proof of the divinity of the Chriſtian revelation. This is an argument that ſtrikes the mind with great force, and which ought mightily to recommend it to the eſteem and veneration of mankind, eſpecially of all the impartial lovers of truth and virtue. The firſt publiſhers of it were men of great ſimplicity, plainneſs and integrity, deſtitute of all worldly advantages, and the remoteſt that can be ſuppoſed from the character of artful impoſtors. Animated by a pure and fervent and well regulated zeal for the glory of God and the ſalvation of men, they expoſed themſelves to the greateſt ſufferings, reproaches, and perſecutions, to eſtabliſh a ſcheme of religion, the deſign of which was to promote the practice of univerſal righteouſneſs: a godlike purity ſhines through the whole of it: there is nothing in it to ſooth and flatter the luſts and vices of men, nothing that breathes the ſpirit of this world, of ambition, avarice, and ſenſuality. And

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as little can the Goſpel be ſuppoſed to be the work of weak hot-brained enthuſiaſts, as of artful ſelf-deſigning impoſtors. When we conſider that the firſt publiſhers of Chriſtianity were for the moſt part men of no learning and education, and yet taught men to form the moſt juſt and ſublime notions of religion, contrary in ſeveral inſtances to the prejudices which they themſelves had deeply imbibed, and far exceeding what the world had known before, and that they alſo advanced the moſt perfect ſcheme of morals, vaſtly ſuperior to what had been taught by the moſt admired philoſophers of the Pagan world, men of the greateſt parts and genius, and even by the moſt celebrated Jewiſh doctors, who had by their corrupt gloſſes depraved the true ſenſe of the law and prophets, this is a ſtrong confirmation of the truth of their pretenſions; that the doctrines they taught, and the precepts they delivered in the name of God, were not of their own invention, a thing of which they were evidently incapable, but were, as they themſelves profeſſed, of a divine original. This was farther confirmed by the many glorious atteſtations given from heaven to the divine miſſion of our Saviour, and of thoſe that were ſent to publiſh the Goſpel in his name. Never were there any facts better atteſted, or which exhibited more illuſtrious proofs of an extraordinary divine interpoſition. They manifeſtly tranſcended all human power; and therefore muſt have been wrought either immediately by the power of God himſelf, or of good beings ſuperior to mankind, acting under his direction, and would never have given their atteſtation to an impoſture. As to evil beings, whatever we ſuppoſe their power to be, it can

be imagined that they would lend their aſſiſtance to give credit to a ſcheme of religion and morals, the plain tendency of which was to turn men from idolatry, vice, and wickedneſs, to the knowledge, obedience, and adoration of the only true God, and to the practice of piety and virtue. So convincing was the evidence of theſe proofs, that the religion of Jeſus ſoon made an amazing progreſs, notwithſtanding the obſtacles and oppoſition it met with, which, humanly ſpeaking, it ſeemed impoſſible to overcome. And wherever it was really believed and embraced, it wrought a wonderful and happy change. Never was there a body of men in the world, ſo holy and virtuous, of ſuch exemplary piety, charity, purity, and temperance, as the primitive Chriſtians. And accordingly one of the topics, which the ancient apologiſts for Chriſtianity conſtantly inſiſted upon, and for the truth of which they appealed to the Heathens themſelves, was the remarkable reformation it wrought in the lives and manners of thoſe that embraced it. They ſhone as lights in the world in the midſt of a vicious and corrupt generation. And ſo they continued whilſt they kept cloſe to the religion and morality laid down in the Holy Scriptures. And in proportion as they deviated from that perfect rule, they either became looſe in their practices, and fell from their primitve virtue, or under pretence of extraordinary purity above what the Goſpel required, ran into the extremes of ſuperſtition. So wiſe, ſo admirable, ſo juſtly tempered is the Goſpel ſcheme of morality, as delivered by Chriſt and his apoſtles, that all the attempts of after ages to raiſe it to a higher degree of excellency, really fell ſhort of its original perfection.

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It muſt be acknowledged, indeed, and has been often objected by the enemies of the Goſpel Revelation, that there is a great corruption of manners among Chriſtians. But this does not prove either that Chriſtianity was not a ſignal advantage to the world when it was firſt publiſhed, or that it is not now of great uſe and benefit, and what we ought to be highly thankful for. The beſt inſtitutions in the world may be abuſed; and the guilt of thoſe who go on in a courſe of vice and wickedneſs, in oppoſition to the clear light and laws of the Goſpel, admits of peculiar aggravations. If there are many profeſſed Chriſtians, who live immoral and diſſolute lives, they are generally ſuch as either content themſelves with the bare name of Chriſtians, without taking any pains to get a juſt acquaintance with the religion they profeſs, or who do not allow themſelves ſeriouſly to conſider and lay to heart its doctrines and precepts, or who do not really believe it, or at leaſt yield but a doubtful and wavering aſſent to it. And this is often very much owing to the purity of the Goſpel morals, which creates prejudices againſt it in the minds of thoſe who are under the power of evil habits and vicious affections. The infidelity and ſcepticiſm of many in the preſent age, and the growing indifferency to all religion, which is too viſible among us, is, I doubt not, one great cauſe of that abounding diſſoluteneſs and corruption, which is ſo much complained of. But ſtill it is certainly true, that if the reſtraints which the Chriſtian religion lays upon vice and wickedneſs were removed, the corruption would be much greater and more general than it is. Many thouſands, who would otherwiſe be vicious and diſſolute, are influenced by the doctrines and pre-

cepts of Chriſtianity to lead ſober, righteous, and godly lives. And notwithſtanding the degeneracy of Chriſtians, there is juſt reaſon to conclude, that there are incomparably more and greater inſtances of a ſublime and rational piety, and an exemplary purity of manners among thoſe that profeſs to believe and receive the Goſpel, than are to be found among thoſe of any other profeſſion or character. The moſt effectual way, therefore, of recovering men to the practice of real piety and virtue, is to endeavour to engage them to a cloſe adherence to the heavenly doctrines, and the pure and excellent laws of the Goſpel, which undeniably gives the beſt and greateſt helps and encouragements to a holy and virtuous life. And it is an advantage which calls for our higheſt thankfulneſs, that whatever corruptions in doctrine and practice profeſſed Chriſtians have fallen into, or may fall into, we have ſtill a perfect rule or ſtandard laid down in the Holy Scriptures, to which we may have recourſe, and by a cloſe attention to which, we may have ſure directions given us as to every part of religion, and the practice of univerſal piety and righteouſneſs.

I ſhall conclude this part of the ſubject with the ſuffrage of two learned and ingenious gentlemen, who are generally thought not to have been much inclined to ſuperſtition and bigotry. The one is the author of the Lettres Juives, who, in the perſon of a Jew, acknowledges, that " the firſt Nazarene doctors preſcribed a doc-
" trine ſo conformable to equity, and ſo uſeful to ſociety, that
" their greateſt adverſaries now agree, that their moral precepts

" are infinitely ſuperior to the wiſeſt philoſophers of antiquity (*o*)." The other is the juſtly admired Monſ. de Monteſquieu. We are informed by good authority, that he declared with his dying breath, to thoſe that ſtood around him, and particularly to the Ducheſs D'Aiguillon, That " the morality of the Goſpel is a moſt " excellent thing, and the moſt valuable preſent which could " poſſibly have been received by man from his Creator (*p*)."

(*o*) " Les premiers docteurs Nazarenes ont preché une doctrine ſi conforme a " l'equité, et ſi utile a la ſocieté, que leurs plus grands adverſaires conviennent " aujourdué, que leurs precepts moraux ſont infiniment au deſſus des plus ſages " philoſophes de l'antiquité." Lettres Juives, lettre 142.

(*p*) See L'Eloge de Monſieur de Monteſquieu, par Monſ. de Maupertuis, Hamburgh 1755.

The End of Part II.

THE

THE ADVANTAGE AND NECESSITY OF THE CHRISTIAN REVELATION,

SHEWN FROM THE

State of Religion in the Heathen World.

PART III.

With reſpect to the Belief of a Future State of Rewards and Puniſhments.

CHAP. I.

The importance of the doctrine of a future ſtate. It is agreeable to right reaſon. The natural and moral arguments for a future ſtate of great weight. Yet not ſo evident, but that if men were left

left merely to their own unaſſiſted reaſon, they would be apt to labour under great doubt and difficulties. A Revelation from God concerning it would be of great advantage.

IT is a point of vaſt conſequence to religion, and to the cauſe of virtue in the world, whether there be life to come, in which men ſhall be rewarded or puniſhed, according to their behaviour in this preſent ſtate; or whether this preſent life be the whole of our exiſtence, beyond which there is nothing to be hoped for or feared, in a way of retribution for our preſent moral conduct.

If there were no future ſtate of retribution, or men generally believed there were none, they would look no farther than the pains and pleaſures of this preſent life: it could not ordinarily be expected that they ſhould have any thing in view, but the gratifying their appetites and inclinations, and promoting what they apprehend to be their preſent worldly intereſt, to which every other conſideration muſt be ſubordinate: fleſh and ſenſe would be their governing principles: good men would be deprived of thoſe hopes which are a ſource of joy and comfort to them in their greateſt afflictions and diſtreſſes, and which tend to animate them to a patient continuance in well-doing: and bad men would be freed from thoſe terrors, than which nothing can be better fitted to put a ſtop to the exorbitancies of their evil courſes, and to avert them even from ſecret acts of wickedneſs. Accordingly, it has been always accounted a principal advantage of the Chriſtian Revelation,

tion, that it gives us the ſtrongeſt aſſurances of a future ſtate, and of the rewards and puniſhments of the life to come. The ableſt patrons of Natural Religion, as oppoſed to Revelation, have been ſenſible of this, and therefore have pretended that the doctrine of the immortality of the ſoul, and a ſtate of future retributions, is ſo obvious to the common reaſon of all mankind, that there needs no extraordinary revelation, either to diſcover it to us, or ſtrengthen our belief of it. And yet there is too much reaſon to think, that they have aſſerted this rather with a view to depreciate the uſe and need of Divine Revelation, than that they really believed that doctrine; ſince at other times they have thrown out ſuſpicions againſt it, and repreſented it as a matter of uncertainty; and ſome of them have uſed their utmoſt efforts to invalidate the proofs which are brought for it.

I readily acknowledge, that the natural and moral arguments for the immortality of the ſoul, and a future ſtate of retributions, are, when duly conſidered, of great weight. And none have ſet theſe proofs in a ſtronger light than the Chriſtian philoſophers and divines. Whoſoever impartially conſiders their manner of treating this ſubject, will find it vaſtly ſuperior to that which was made uſe of by the moſt eminent Pagan philoſophers who lived before the coming of our Saviour. In this, as well as other inſtances, Revelation has been of great advantage for aſſiſting and improving our reaſon in matters of the higheſt importance. It has been ſhewn, with great ſtrength and clearneſs of argument, that matter, as far as we can judge of it from its known eſſential proper-

ties, is in its ownnature incapable of thought, however diverſified or modified: that a ſubſtance compounded of innumerable parts, as all own matter to be, cannot be the ſubject of an individual conſciouſneſs, the ſeat of which muſt be a ſimple and undivided ſubſtance (*a*): that intellect and will are of a quite different nature from corporeal figure and motion; and the ſublime faculties and operations of the human ſoul, its power of riſing above material and temporal objects, and contemplating things ſpiritual and inviſible, cœleſtial and eternal, appear to be the properties of a ſubſtance of a far nobler and higher kind than this corruptible fleſh: and that therefore there is no reaſon to think it will die with the body; but that being of a quite different nature, eſſentially active, ſimple, and indiviſible, it is deſigned by the Creator, who made it ſo, for an immortal exiſtence. To this may be added the ſtrong apprehenſions of a future ſtate, ſo natural to the human mind, and which are not to be found in any of the inferior animals: and that men alone of all the creatures in this lower world are capable of being governed by the hopes and fears of the world to come. This yields a reaſonable preſumption, that the Author of their frame deſigned they ſhould be ſo governed: and it is ſcarce conſiſtent with the beſt ideas we can form of the Divine Wiſdom and Goodneſs, to ſuppoſe that he deſigned and formed them to be governed by a lie. It ſtrengthens this, when we conſider, that it

(*a*) This is very well argued by the learned Dr. Samuel Clarke, in his Letter to Mr. Dodwell, and his ſeveral defences of it againſt an acute and ingenious adverſary. Nor have I ever ſeen a ſufficient anſwer to that book.

ſeems abſurd to imagine that ſo noble a creature as man, endued with ſuch admirable faculties, by which he is capable of making immortal proficiencies in knowledge and virtue, ſhould be deſigned for no other life than this ſhort and tranſitory exiſtence, in which he is incapable of arriving at the true perfection and felicity of his nature. Theſe reaſonings receive a mighty additional force from the moral arguments for a ſtate of future retributions, drawn from the preſent ſeemingly unequal diſpenſations of Divine Providence; the many evils and ſufferings to which the beſt and worthieſt of men are often expoſed in this preſent ſtate; and the proſperous condition of bad and wicked men, many of whom have continued in flouriſhing and ſplendid circumſtances to the end of their lives. From theſe and ſeveral other conſiderations which might be mentioned, it ſeems reaſonable to conclude, that this is not the only life man is deſigned for, and that there is a ſtate before us, in which good men ſhall be amply rewarded, and the wicked puniſhed: and even thoſe ſecret good or evil actions and diſpoſitions which did not come under the cognizance of earthly tribunals, ſhall be brought into judgment, and meet with a ſuitable recompence from the ſupreme and moſt righteous Lord and Governor of the world. Theſe things carry a great deal of probability to ſerious and contemplative minds, and ſhew that what is revealed to us in the Goſpel on this ſubject is ſuited to the beſt notions we can form of the nature of man, and the wiſdom and righteouſneſs of the divine adminiſtrations.

But yet it muſt be acknowledged, that there are objections and difficulties brought on the other ſide, which, if men were left merely to themſelves, and to their own unaſſiſted reaſon, might be apt to raiſe doubts in their minds, and very much weaken their belief of this great truth. The metaphyſical arguments drawn from the different nature of body and ſpirit, however juſt in themſelves, are only fitted to make impreſſions on a few perſons of philoſophical minds, and who have been accuſtomed to abſtracted ſpeculations, but carry no great light of evidence and conviction to the generality of mankind; who, having from their birth been wholly converſant with ſenſible and material objects, cannot eaſily form a notion of a ſpiritual being diſtinct from matter. After the enquiries and diſquiſitions of men of the greateſt genius and ability in all ages, we yet know very little of the nature and eſſence of our own ſouls, of the origin of our ideas, and the proper difference between body and ſpirit, and what influence the one of them may have upon the other. Experience convinces us of the intimate connection and cloſe union there is between our bodies and ſouls in this preſent ſtate: and that the exerciſe of our faculties, and the operations of our ſouls, very much depend upon the due diſpoſition of the bodily organs. To which it may be added, that the ſoul often ſeems to decay with the body, and to outward appearance is extinguiſhed with it. Even thoſe who moſt firmly believe the ſoul's immortality, find it very difficult to form a diſtinct conception how it exiſts and operates when ſeparated from the body. The world to come is hidden from our view: it is not the object of any of our ſenſes:

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it is a ſtate which we are wholly unacquainted with, and of which, if left merely to ourſelves, we are ſcarce capable of forming a clear and ſatisfactory idea; and therefore is the proper object of a Divine Revelation, and of the exerciſe of that faith "which "is the evidence of things not ſeen." And as the ſoul of man does not exiſt independently by an abſolute neceſſity of nature, but depends for the continuation of its exiſtence upon the will of God, we can be no farther ſure of its immortal duration, than we are ſure that it is the will of God that it ſhould be ſo: and though this may be probably gathered from ſeveral conſiderations, yet nothing could give us ſo full an aſſurance of it, as a Revelation from God, containing an expreſs diſcovery of his will concerning it. The moral arguments for a future ſtate are indeed of great force; yet it muſt be owned, that there are ſuch ſecrets and depths of Providence, which we are not able to account for; we have ſuch narrow views of things, and know ſo little of the divine counſels, and of the reaſons and ends of the divine adminiſtrations, and what meaſures it may pleaſe Infinite Wiſdom to take in the government of the world, that there may ſtill be room for doubts and uncertainties in a ſerious and thoughtful mind, which nothing leſs than the light of Divine Revelation can effectually diſpel.

But the ſureſt way of judging of what may be expected from human unaſſiſted reaſon, with reſpect to the immortality of the ſoul and a future ſtate, is to conſider what men of the greateſt abilities in the Pagan world, and who ſeem to have been capable of

of carrying reaſon to its higheſt improvement, have ſaid and thought upon it. This was for many ages the ſubject of their philoſophical enquiries, and which was debated among them with all the ſtrength of argument they were maſters of. And how far they ſucceeded in their enquiries, will appear from the following treatiſe.

CHAP.

CHAP. II.

Some notions of the immortality of the ſoul and a future ſtate obtained among mankind from the moſt antient times, and ſpread very generally through the nations. This was not originally the effect of human reaſon and philoſophy, nor was it merely the invention of legiſlators for political purpoſes: but was derived to them by a moſt antient tradition from the earlieſt ages, and was probably a part of the primitive religion communicated by Divine Revelation to the firſt of the human race.

BEFORE we enter upon an examination of the ſentiments of philoſophers on this ſubject, it is proper to obſerve, that the belief of the immortality of the ſoul and a future ſtate obtained among mankind in the earlieſt ages: of which we have all the proof that a matter of this nature is capable of. This is acknowledged by ſome who are otherwiſe no great friends to that doctrine. Lord Bolingbroke owns, That "the doctrine of the "immortality of the ſoul, and a future ſtate of rewards and puniſhments, began to be taught before we have any light into "antiquity. And when we begin to have any, we find it eſtabliſhed: that it was ſtrongly inculcated from times immemorial, and as early as the moſt antient and learned nations appear "to us (*b*)." And we find it equally obtained among the moſt barbarous as among the moſt civilized nations. The antient

(*b*) Bolingbroke's Works, Vol. V. p. 237. edit. 4to.

Scythians.

Scythians, Indians, Gauls, Germans, Britons, as well as the Greeks and Romans, believed that ſouls are immortal, and that men ſhall live in another ſtate after death, though it muſt be confeſſed their ideas of it were very obſcure (*c*). There were ſcarce any of the American nations, when the Europeans firſt came among them, but had ſome notion of it.

It is obſerved by a celebrated writer, that the moſt antient Greek poets, who repreſent the manners and cuſtoms of their own and other nations, ſtill ſpeak of this as their popular opinion and belief (*d*). Timæus the Pythagorean commends the Ionian poet [Homer] for the account he gives from antient tradition of future puniſhments (*e*): and if this was an antient tradition in Homer's time, it muſt have been of very great antiquity. Socrates, as repreſented by Plato, endeavoured to prove the immortality of the ſoul in a way of reaſon and argument, but he never pretended to be the firſt inventor of this doctrine, or to have himſelf found it out merely by his own enquiries, but frequently ſpeaks of it as a moſt antient and venerable tradition. Thus in the Phædo Socrates ſaith, " I am in good hope, that there is ſomething re-" maining for thoſe that are dead; and that, as hath been ſaid of " old, [ὥσπερ γὲ καὶ πάλαι λέγεται] it is much better for good than " for bad men (*f*)." Plato in this agreed with his great maſter.

(*c*) Grotius de Verit. Relig. Chriſt. lib. i. ſect. 22.

(*d*) Divine Legation of Moſes, Vol. I. book ii. ſect. 1. p. 90. 4th edit.

(*e*) See his treatiſe of the Soul of the World, at the latter end.

(*f*) Platon. Opera, p. 387. A. edit. Lugd.

In

In his ſeventh epiſtle written to Dion's friends and relations, he ſays, " That we ought always to believe the antient and ſacred words," [which plainly points to ſome traditions of great antiquity, and ſuppoſed to be of divine original] " which ſhew both that the " ſoul is immortal, and that it hath judges, and ſuffers the greateſt " puniſhments, when it is diſengaged from the body (*g*)." From whence he concludes, that it is a leſs evil to ſuffer the greateſt acts of injuſtice than to do them. Ariſtotle, as cited by Plutarch, ſpeaking of the happineſs of men after their departure out of this life, repreſents it as a moſt antient opinion, ſo old that no man knows when it began, or who was the author of it, that it hath been handed down to us by tradition from infinite ages (*h*). Cicero ſpeaking of the immortality of the ſoul, ſuppoſes it to have been held " by thoſe of the beſt authority, which in every caſe is and " ought to be of great weight: and that all the antients agreed in " it, who were the more worthy of credit, and the more likely " to know the truth, the nearer they approached to the firſt riſe of " mankind, and to their divine original (*i*)." He alſo obſerves, that " the antients believed it, before they became acquainted " with natural philoſophy, which was not cultivated till many " years afterwards: and that they were perſuaded of things by a

(*g*) Platon. Opera, p. 716. A. Πείθεσθαι δὲ ἅτοις ἀιεὶ χρὴ τοῖς παλαίοις καὶ ἱεροῖς λόγοις, οἱ δὴ μηύσιν ἡμῖν καὶ ἀΐδά ἄδον ψυχὴν εἶναι, δικαστάς τε ἴσχειν, καὶ τίνειν τὰς μεγίστας τιμωρίας, ὅταν τις ἀπαλλάχθη τὲ σώματος.

(*h*) Plutarch. in Conſol. ad Apollon. Oper. tom. II. p. 115. C. edit. Xyl.

(*i*) " Autoribus quidem ad iſtam ſententiam uti optumis poſſumus quod in om- " nibus cauſis, et debet et ſolet valere plurimùm: et primùm quidem omni anti- " quitate, quæ quò propiùs aberat ab ortu et divina progenie, hoc melius ea for- " taſſe quæ erant vera cernebat." Tuſcul. Diſput. lib. i. cap. 12.

" kind of natural admonition, without enquiring into the reaſons " and cauſes of them (*k*)." He afterwards argues from the conſent of all nations concerning it. " Permanere animos arbitramur " conſenſu nationum omnium (*l*)." And Seneca in his 117th epiſtle repreſents this univerſal conſent as of no ſmall moment in this argument.

Plutarch in his Conſolation to Apollonius, not only approves the paſſage of Ariſtotle produced above concerning the great antiquity of this tradition, but repreſents it as an opinion delivered by the moſt antient poets and philoſophers [ὁ τῶν παλαίων τε ποιητῶν καὶ φιλοσόφων λόγος] that ſome kind of honour and dignity ſhall be conferred upon excellent perſons, after their departure out of this life; and that there is a certain region appointed, in which the ſouls of ſuch perſons reſide (*m*). The ſame eminent philoſopher in his conſolatory letter to his wife on the death of their little child, ſuppoſes that the ſouls of infants paſs after death into a better and more divine ſtate. And that this is what may be gathered from their antient laws and cuſtoms derived by tradition from their anceſtors (*n*).

(*k*) " Qui nondùm ea quos multis poſt annis tractari cepiſſent phyſica didiciſſent, tantum ſibi perſuaſerant, quantum naturâ admonente cognoverant, rationes et cauſas rerum non tenebant." Tuſcul. Diſput. lib. i. cap. 13.

(*l*) Ibid. cap. 16.

(*m*) Plutarch. ubi ſupra. p. 120. B.

(*n*) Plutarch. Oper. tom. II. p. 612.

I think

I think it ſufficiently appears from the ſeveral teſtimonies which have been produced, that the doctrine of the immortality of the ſoul and a future ſtate obtained very generally among mankind in the earlieſt ages. It is true that ſome have pretended to aſſign the firſt authors of this opinion. Cicero himſelf ſays, that, as far as appears from written accounts, Pherecydes Syrius was the firſt who taught that the ſouls of men are ſempiternal or immortal. For Cicero uſes theſe words as ſynonymous. Thus he ſpeaks of the body's being buried after death in a ſempiternal ſleep, i. e. not a ſleep that never had a beginning, but which ſhall never have an end (*o*). " Credo equidem etiam alios tot ſæculis; " ſed quod literis extet, Pherecydes Syrius primum dixit animos " eſſe hominum ſempiternos (*p*)." But it is evident that he does not here intend to affirm, that Pherecydes was abſolutely the firſt

(*o*) Tuſcul. Diſput. lib. i. cap. 16. The author of Le Diſcours ſur la Vie humaine, publiſhed at the end of the Penſées Philoſophiques, after having aſſerted, that from the moſt remote antiquity, the entire deſtruction of our being at death was a doctrine believed among the philoſophers, tells us, that Cicero names the man who firſt took upon him to believe that the ſoul is immortal. But it is manifeſt that it was not Cicero's intention to inſinuate that Pherecydes was the firſt man that ever believed the immortality of the ſoul. The ſame confident writer adds, that " in the preſent enlightened age, it is demonſtrated by a thouſand " proofs, that there is only one life and one happineſs," i. e. a happineſs confined in this preſent life. " Dans un ſiecle auſſi eclairè que le notre, il eſt enfin demontrè par mille preuves ſans replique, qu'il n' y a qu' une vie, et qu' une felicité." An excellent inſtance this of the extraordinary ſagacity of the preſent age: i. e. of thoſe who ſet up for maſters of reaſon in oppoſition to revelation. And indeed this author plainly and without diſguiſe puſhes this ſyſtem of the mortality of the ſoul, and the utter extinction of our exiſtence at death, to its natural conſequences, utterly ſubverſive of all religion and morality. See here above p. 98. of this volume.

(*p*) Tuſcul. Diſput. l. i. cap. 16.

that ever held the immortality of the ſoul. For he himſelf repreſents it as having been believed from all antiquity, by thoſe who were neareſt the origin of the human race. And in this very paragraph he declares it as his own opinion, that there were others in the ſucceſſion of ſo many ages who had taught it, though their names are not recorded. His meaning therefore is probably this, that though others had believed and maintained it long before, and it ſtood on the foot of ancient tradition, Pherecydes was the firſt of the philoſophers, of whom there was any account then extant, who taught it to his ſcholars as part of his philoſophical doctrine. Diogenes Laertius tells us, that ſome affirmed that Thales was the firſt who ſaid that ſouls are immortal (*q*). Pauſanias gives the honour of it to the Chaldeans and Perſian Magi, from whom he thinks the Greeks had it (*r*). And Laertius alſo mentions it as the doctrine of the Magi, that men ſhall live again and be immortal (*s*). According to Athenæus, Homer was the firſt who ſaid that the ſoul is immortal (*t*). Others name Pythagoras for the author of it. Herodotus aſcribes it to the Egyptians (*u*). And in this he has been followed by others. Lord Bolingbroke, after having declared in the paſſage above referred to, that it began to be taught before we have any light into antiquity, yet pretends to aſſign the origin of it, and that it was invented in

(*q*) Laert. lib. i. ſegm. 24.

(*r*) In Meſſeniacis, cap. 32.

(*s*) Laert. in Proœm. ſegm. 9

(*t*) Deipnoſ. lib. xi. p. 507.

(*u*) Lib. ii. cap. 122.

Egypt,

Egypt, and came from thence to the Greeks, from whom it was derived to the Romans (*x*). All that can be juſtly concluded from thoſe different accounts is, that the author of this doctrine was not known: that the ſeveral perſons which have been mentioned taught the immortality of the ſoul, but that this doctrine was really of more antient date than any of them, and even from times immemorial. There is therefore juſt ground to conclude that it was not originally the reſult of philoſophical diſquiſitions, to which men did not much apply themſelves in thoſe early ages. Nor was it merely the invention of lawgivers for political purpoſes, as ſome have repreſented it. The noble author abovementioned expreſly aſſerts, that "the antient theiſts, polytheiſts, "philoſophers, and legiſlators, invented the doctrine of future re-"wards and puniſhments, to give an additional ſtrength to the "ſanctions of the law of nature (*y*)." That it gives a mighty ſanction to that law will be readily allowed; and its great utility this way, as the learned biſhop of Glouceſter has very properly obſerved, is no ſmall argument of its truth. It has been already hinted, that men's being capable of being governed by the hopes and fears of the life to come, which cannot be ſaid of any of the inferior animals, ſeems plainly to ſhew that the author of the human frame deſigned man not merely for the preſent, but for a future ſtate of exiſtence. For who would undertake to propoſe ſuch ſanctions to the brutes? The wiſeſt of the ancient legiſlators encouraged the belief of a future ſtate, as they did that of the ex-

(*x*) Bolingbroke's Works, Vol. V. p. 288.

(*y*) Ibid.

iſtence

iſtence of a God and a Providence. But they were not the authors or inventers of theſe doctrines. They took advantage of the notions of theſe things, which had already obtained among the people, and endeavoured to make their own uſe of them. The moſt reaſonable account which can be given of the early and univerſal ſpreading of the doctrine of a future ſtate among the nations, is, that it was part of the primitive religion communicated to the firſt parents and anceſtors of the human race, and which came originally by divine revelation, and was from them tranſmitted to their poſterity. Grotius ſpeaking of the notion that the ſouls of men ſurvived their bodies, ſays, that " this moſt an-" cient tradition ſpread from our firſt parents (for from whom " elſe could it come ?) to almoſt all civilized nations." " Quæ " antiquiſſima traditio a primis (unde enim alioqui ?) parentibus, " ad populos moratiores pene omnes manavit (z)." And indeed it cannot well be conceived, that the firſt men in the rude illiterate ages, when they were little uſed to abſtracted reaſonings, ſhould be able to form notions (if left merely to themſelves) of ſpiritual immaterial beings, or that they had ſouls within them which ſhould ſurvive their bodies, and continue to think and act without the aſſiſtance of the bodily organs: how ſhould they purſue the refined ſpeculations concerning the nature and qualities of the ſoul, which ſo puzzled and embaraſſed the acuteſt philoſophers, and the greateſt maſters of reaſon, in the ages of learning and ſcience? The firſt men could not ſo much as know, till they were taught by obſervation and experience, or had information of it

(z) Grot de Verit. Relig. Chriſt. lib. i. cap. 22.

by foreign inſtruction, that they were to die and have an end put to their lives by the diſſolution of the bodily frame, much leſs that there was to be another life after this, in which they were to be rewarded or puniſhed according to their preſent conduct. Since therefore it cannot be denied that ſome notion of a future ſtate obtained very early in the world, and ſpread very generally among mankind, and ſince there is little likelihood that men in thoſe firſt ages came to the knowledge of it in the way of reaſoning and abſtracted ſpeculation, it is moſt reaſonable to reſolve it into a primitive univerſal tradition, derived from the firſt ages. And to this ſeveral of the paſſages which have been produced from the moſt eminent Pagan writers plainly refer, and ſome of them repreſent that tradition as having been of a divine original. And of this there are plain intimations given us in the Holy Scriptures. It is indeed urged by a learned and ingenious writer, who is not willing to allow that the nations received any part of their religion by tradition from the firſt parents of mankind; that "it "does not appear that either Adam or Noah received from God "any thing concerning the immortality of the ſoul, or a ſtate of "future rewards and puniſhments; and that no paſſage can be "produced, which contains ſuch revelation (*a*)." But it appears from the expreſs teſtimony of the ſacred writer to the Hebrews, that Abraham and other patriarchs, who lived but a few ages after the flood, looked forward beyond this preſent tranſitory ſtate to a better heavenly country. He repreſents both

(*a*) Dr. Sykes's Connection and Principles of Natural and Revealed Religion, p. 438, 439, 440.

them,

them, and ſome of thoſe who lived before the flood, as having lived and walked by faith, which he deſcribes to be the " ſub- " ſtance, or confident expectation (as the word there uſed in the " original might properly be rendered) of things hoped for, and " the evidence of things not ſeen." And this faith muſt be ſuppoſed to have been originally founded on a divine revelation or promiſe. And ſince it appears from the Moſaic writings, that God communicated by revelation the knowledge of ſeveral things relating to religion and their duty to the firſt parents of mankind, it may be reaſonably concluded, that ſome notion was alſo given them of the immortality of the ſoul and a future ſtate; eſpecially after the ſentence of death pronounced upon them after the fall. Some notices of this kind ſeem to have been particularly neceſſary on occaſion of the death of Abel, who probably was the firſt man that died, and who ſeemed to periſh in his righteouſneſs; and afterwards, by the tranſlation of Enoch, God gave a manifeſt proof of a future ſtate, prepared for thoſe who had obeyed and ſerved him in a holy and virtuous life here on earth. And as this muſt be known to Noah, he could not be ignorant of the life to come, and would undoubtedly be careful to inſtruct his poſterity in a point of ſuch vaſt importance. This, which is plainly intimated concerning the antediluvian patriarchs, is, as hath been already hinted, ſtill clearer with reſpect to Abraham, and other patriarchs after the flood; as any one may ſee that will conſider what is ſaid concerning them in the eleventh chapter of the epiſtle to the Hebrews, verſe 9, 10. 13, 14, 15, 16. To which it may be added, that St. Paul ſeems to refer to ſome very

antient

antient promiſe or revelation concerning this matter, when he ſpeaks of God's having "promiſed eternal life, πρὸ χρόνων αἰωνίων, be-"fore antient times," or as Chryſoſtom, Theodoret, and Oecumenius render it, ἄνωθεν ἀπ' ἀρχῆς, "of old time from the be-"ginning of ages." Titus i. 2. (*b*)

Thus we have the teſtimony of the Holy Scriptures, and of the moſt eminent Heathen writers concerning the great antiquity of the doctrine of a future ſtate. But in proceſs of time, in this as well as other inſtances, the ancient primitive traditions became greatly corrupted: and at the time of our Saviour's coming the belief of it was greatly obſcured and almoſt loſt, even in the moſt learned and civilized parts of the Heathen world. There was therefore great need of a divine revelation, which ſhould exhibit far clearer diſcoveries, and give fuller aſſurances of it than had been ever given to the world before. This was done to the greateſt advantage by the Chriſtian revelation: ſo that it may be juſtly ſaid, that our Lord Jeſus Chriſt hath "brought life and "immortality to light through the Goſpel."

(*b*) See Dr. Whitby's Commentary on Tit. i. 2. See alſo Dr. Benſon's Paraphraſe and Notes on that place.

CHAP. III.

The ancient traditions concerning the immortality of the ſoul and a future ſtate became in proceſs of time greatly obſcured and corrupted. It was abſolutely denied by many of the philoſophers, and rejected as a vulgar error. Others repreſented it as altogether uncertain, and having no ſolid foundation to ſupport it. The various and contradictory ſentiments of the philoſophers concerning the nature of the human ſoul. Many of the Peripatetics denied the ſubſiſtence of the ſoul after death, and this ſeems to have been Ariſtotle's own opinion. The Stoics had no ſettled or conſiſtent ſcheme on this head: nor was the doctrine of the immortality of the ſoul a doctrine of their ſchool. A future ſtate not acknowledged by the celebrated Chineſe philoſopher Confucius, nor by the ſect of the learned who profeſs to be his diſciples.

IT has been ſhewn, that the belief of the immortality of the ſoul, and a future ſtate, obtained very early among the nations, even in ages that were accounted rude and illiterate. One would have hoped that afterwards in the ages of learning and philoſophy, a doctrine ſo uſeful to mankind, and ſo agreeable to right reaſon, would have acquired new ſtrength. But the fact was otherwiſe: many of thoſe who pretended to a wiſdom and penetration above the vulgar, quitting the ancient traditions, and affecting to govern themſelves by the pure dictates of reaſon, abſolutely denied the doctrine of the immortality of the ſoul and a future

future ſtate, and exploded it as a vulgar error, unworthy of men of ſenſe, and fit only to be left to the unthinking multitude. There were whole ſects of philoſophers, whoſe profeſſed tenet it was, that the ſoul died with the body. Such were Democritus and his followers, the Cynics, Cyrenaicks, and eſpecially the numerous and wide extended ſect of the Epicureans: and many other philoſophers agreed with them in this point. The ſeveral ſorts of Sceptics, according to their manner, employed all the ſubtilty they were maſters of againſt the doctrine of the immortality of the ſoul, and a future ſtate, as well as againſt other articles of popular belief. The famous Ariſtotle expreſſes himſelf in ſuch a manner as leaves his greateſt admirers in doubt what his real ſentiments were on this ſubject. Plutarch ſeems to give it as Ariſtotle's opinion, " that death belongs only to the body, not " to the ſoul; for that there is no death of the ſoul." Θάνατον εἶναι μόνον τοῦ σώματος, ἀ ψυχῆς, ταύτης γὰρ οὐχ ὑπάρχει θάνατος (*c*). But in the firſt book of the Nicomachian Ethics, the eleventh chapter, having put the queſtion, whether any man can be happy after death, Ariſtotle intimates that it would be altogether abſurd for thoſe to ſay ſo, who make happineſs to conſiſt in operation, which was his own opinion (*d*). And in the end of that chapter he repreſents it as a matter of doubt and diſpute, concerning thoſe that are dead, whether they are partakers of any good, or of the contrary (*e*). But in the third book of thoſe Ethics, the ninth

(*c*) Plutarch. de Placit. Philoſ. lib. v. cap. 25.

(*d*) Ariſtot. Oper. tom. II. p. 13. B. edit. Paris 1629.

(*e*) Ibid. p. 15. A.

chapter, he himſelf ſeems plainly to determine that point in the negative. He there aſſerts, that " death is the moſt dreadful of " all things: for that it is the end [of our exiſtence]: and that " to him that is dead there ſeems nothing farther to remain, " whether good or evil." Φοβερώτατον δὲ ὁ θάνατος, πέρας γάρ, καὶ οὐδὲν ἔτι τῷ τεθνεῶτι δοκεῖ, οὔτε ἀγαθὸν, οὔτε κακὸν εἶναι (*f*). Origen who was well acquainted with the doctrine of the philoſophers, ſays, that Ariſtotle, after having been for twenty years a hearer of Plato, going off from his maſter, accuſed his doctrine of the immortality of the ſoul (*g*); and Atticus a noted Platonic philoſopher directly charges him with denying it (*h*). Dicæarchus an eminent Peripatetic philoſopher, whom Cicero highly commends, writ books to prove that ſouls are mortal (*i*). Others of the Peripatetics were of the ſame opinion. Many of them held, as Stobæus informs us, that the ſoul is a mere quality, like the harmony of a muſical inſtrument, which vaniſhes when the body is diſſolved, and ſuddenly paſſes into a ſtate of non-exiſtence. Εἰς τὸ μὴ εἶναι μεθίσταται (*k*). What that great man Cicero ſays of the philoſophers in his time is remarkable. In that celebrated treatiſe where he ſets himſelf to prove the immortality of the ſoul, he repreſents the contrary as the prevailing opinion; that there were crowds of opponents, not the Epicureans only, but, which he

(*f*) Ariſtot. Oper. tom. II. p. 36. B.

(*g*) Origen cont. Celſ. lib. ii. p. 67. edit. Spenſer.

(*h*) Apud Euſeb. Præpar. Evangel. lib. xv. cap. 5.

(*i*) Tuſcul. Diſput. lib. i. cap. 31.

(*k*) Stob. Eclog. Phyſ. p. 116. edit. Plantin.

could

could not well account for, thoſe that were eſteemed the moſt learned perſons had that doctrine in contempt. " Catervæ veniunt " contradicentium, nec ſolùm Epicureorum, ſed neſcio quomodo " doctiſſimus quiſque contemnit (*l*)." There needs no more to convince any man of the ſtrange confuſion among the philoſophers on this head than to read the account Cicero gives of their various ſentiments concerning the nature of the ſoul. Some ſaid it was the heart, others the blood, others the brain, others breath, others fire, others ſaid it was nothing but an empty name, others that it was harmony, others that it was number, others that it was of a threefold nature of which the rational ſoul is the principal, others ſuppoſed it to be a fifth eſſence. Many held it not to be diſtinct from the bodily temperament: and of thoſe who held it to be diſtinct from the body, ſome were of opinion that it was extinguiſhed with it at death, or at leaſt that it was ſoon after diſſipated, and did not continue long (*m*). Seneca ſays, " there " are innumerable queſtions about the ſoul, whence it comes, of " what quality it is, when it begins to be, how long it ſhall con- " tinue, and whether it paſſes from one place to another, and " changes its habitation, being caſt into different forms of ani- " mals." " Innumerabiles ſunt quæſtiones de animo: unde ſit, " qualis ſit, quando eſſe incipiat, quamdiu ſit, an aliunde aliò " tranſeat, et domicilium mutet, ad alias animantium formas " aliaſque conjectus (*n*)." The reader may alſo conſult what

(*l*) Tuſcul. Diſput. lib. i. cap. 31.

(*m*) Ibid. lib. i. cap. 9, 10, 11.

(*n*) Senec. Epiſt. 88.

Plutarch

Plutarch ſays concerning the different opinions of philoſophers on the nature of the ſoul in his treatiſe de Placit. Philoſ. lib. iv. cap. 2, 3. (*o*) The famous Galen, who was a man of great learning and abilities, was particularly inquiſitive about the nature of the human ſoul, but could not come to any ſatisfaction about it. He declares, that he was quite ignorant of the nature of the ſoul, but that he violently ſuſpected that its eſſence is corporeal, which he was led to think by obſerving that it depends in all its powers and operations upon the diſpoſitions and temperament of the body (*p*).

In enquiring into the opinions of the philoſphers on this ſubject, it is particularly proper to take notice of the Stoics. As none of the philoſophers were ſtricter moraliſts, or profeſſed greater zeal for the cauſe of virtue than they did, one might be apt to expect, that they would have been ſtrong advocates for the immortality of the ſoul, and a future ſtate of rewards and puniſhments. But this was far from being the caſe. Lactantius indeed tells us concerning Zeno the Father of the Stoic ſect, that he taught that " the abodes of good men in the ſubterraneous re-
" gions were diſtinct and ſeparate from thoſe of the wicked; the
" former inhabit pleaſant and delightful regions, the latter ſuffer
" puniſhments in dark places, and in horrid gulfs full of filth
" and naſtineſs." " Eſſe inferos Zeno Stoicus docuit, et ſedes pio-
" rum ab impiis eſſe diſcretas, et illos quidem quietas et delecta-

(*o*) Plutarch. Oper. tom. II. p. 898. edit. Xyl.

(*p*) Galen quod animi mores, &c. cap. 1, 2, 3. 5. 9. as cited by Dr. Campbell, Neceſſ. Revel. p. 185. et ſeq. where the reader may ſee it at large.

" biles

" biles incolere regiones, hos verò luere pœnas, in tenebroſis locis " atque cœni voraginibus horrendis (*q*)." This was agreeable to the repreſentations made of theſe things in the myſteries. And it might well be, that Zeno expreſſed the popular opinion in this matter rather than his own. But whatever were his ſentiments upon it, certain it is that the doctrine of the immortality of the ſoul, and a future ſtate of rewards and puniſhments, was not the profeſſed doctrine of his ſchool, nor was it ever reckoned among the avowed principles of the Stoic ſect. I cannot indeed ſay with a very learned writer, " we know that the philoſophic principle " of his ſchool was that the ſoul died with the body," for which he refers to Plutarch's treatiſe de Placit. Philoſ. lib. iv. cap. 7. But Plutarch there only gives it as their opinion, that when the ſoul goes out of the body, " that of the weaker, that is, " of the unlearned, is mixed with the concretions, or earthly ele- " ments; but that which is more ſtrong and vigorous, ſuch as " are the ſouls of the wiſe, ſhall continue to the conflagration." And he there diſtinguiſhes the ſentiments of the Stoics from that of Democritus and Epicurus, who, he ſays, taught that the ſoul is corruptible, and periſheth with the body. Cicero expreſly aſcribeth to the Stoics the opinion that the ſoul ſurviveth the body, and ſubſiſteth in a ſeparate ſtate for ſome time after death, but not always. " Aiunt manere animos cum à corpore exceſ- ſerint, ſed non ſemper." And he blames them, for that when they acknowledged that the ſoul continues to ſubſiſt ſeparately from the body, which is the moſt difficult part of the controverſy,

(*q*) Lactan. Divin. Inſtit. lib. vii. cap. 7.

yet they would not allow that which is the natural conſequence of it, that the ſoul ſhall never die (*r*). Agreeable to this is that which Laertius ſaith, that the Stoics held that " the ſoul re- " maineth after death, but that it is corruptible." Ψυχὴν μετὰ θανατὸν ἐπιμένειν, φθαρτὴν δὲ εἶναι (*s*.) The ſame Laertius informs us, that Cleanthes maintained, that all ſouls ſhall continue to the conflagration; Chryſippus, that only the ſouls of the wiſe ſhall continue ſo long (*t*). Numenius, as cited by Euſebius, Præp. Evang. lib. xv. cap. 20. gives it as the opinion of many of the Stoics, that " the ſoul is corruptible, but does not die or periſh " immediately upon its departure from the body, but continues " for ſome time by itſelf, that which is wiſe to the diſſolution of " all things, that of fools for ſome ſhort time." It is however true that ſome of the Stoics ſeem to have held that the ſoul dies immediately with the body, or at leaſt that it is immediately reſolved or reſumed into one common nature, or the univerſal ſoul, ſo as to loſe its individual exiſtence. Some paſſages in Epictetus and Antoninus ſeem to look this way. From all which it may be gathered that the Stoics had very confuſed notions on this head, and ſeem not to have formed any ſettled or conſiſtent ſcheme. It is obſerved in a note on the excellent tranſlation of Antoninus's Meditations publiſhed at Glaſgow, that " the Stoics ſpoke doubt- " fully about a future ſtate, whether the rational ſoul ſubſiſted as

(*r*) Tuſcul. Diſput. lib. i. cap. 32.

(*s*) Laert. lib. vii. ſegm. 156.

(*t*) Ibid. ſegm. 157. See alſo Menagius's obſervations upon it, p. 326. edit. Wetſtein.

" ſeparate

" ſeparate intelligences, or were abſorbed in the Divinity. Many " believed a ſeparate exiſtence of good ſouls for a thouſand years, " and of the eminently virtuous for eternity, in the dignity of " gods, which we would call that of angels, with delegated " powers for governing certain parts of the univerſe (*u*)." To which may be added, what is ſaid in another note, " that we " cannot conclude from their ſpeaking of the re-union after death, " that individual perſons ceaſe to be diſtinct perſons from the " Deity, and from each other; ſince it was the known tenet of " the Stoics, that heroic ſouls were called to the dignity of gods " or immortal angels: and they mean no more than an entire " moral union by reſignation and a complete conformity of " will (*v*)." But this does not ſeem to me to be a juſt repreſentation of the Stoical doctrine. They certainly meant more by the refuſion into the univerſal ſoul than a moral union or conformity to the will of God. It is capable of a clear proof from the beſt of the ancient writers who have mentioned it, that this re-union of the ſoul was underſtood not merely in a moral but in a phyſical ſenſe. The reader may ſee this fully proved by the learned and judicious author of the " Critical Enquiry into the Opinions " and Practices of the ancient Philoſophers concerning the Nature " of the Soul and a future State," ch. v. where there is an accurate account given of the opinion of the Stoics in this matter. At preſent I ſhall only obſerve that it is a known part of the Stoical doctrine, that at certain periods and conflagrations, a ſucceſſion of

(*u*) See the Glaſgow tranſlation of Antoninus, p. 228.

(*v*) Ibid. p. 454.

which they believed would happen, all things were to be conſumed and reſolved into the ſubſtance of God himſelf, which they ſuppoſed to be of a fiery nature: that nothing would remain but the chief God, and that all the other gods, much more the heroic ſouls, were corruptible and would die. For which notion they are ſeverely expoſed by Plutarch in his two treatiſes againſt the Stoics. To this notion Epictetus refers when he talks of " Jupiter's being alone at the conflagration, and hav- " ing neither Juno, nor Pallas, nor Apollo, nor brother, nor ſon, " nor dependent, nor relation (*x*)." Seneca ſpeaking of the conflagration or diſſolution of the world, ſaith, that " thoſe ſouls " which were happy, and had obtained eternal felicity, ſhall then " be involved in the common ruin, and return to the antient ele- " ments." " Nos quoque felices animæ, et æterna fortitæ, cum " Deo viſum erit iterum iſta moliri, labentibus cunctis, et ipſi " parva ruinæ ingentis acceſſio, in antiqua elementa vertemur (*y*)." Thus it was to be even with the moſt privileged ſouls. The Stoics therefore did not believe, as is ſuppoſed in the above-mentioned note, that eminently virtuous ſouls were to continue in a ſeparate exiſtence, and in the dignity of gods to eternity, except by eternity be meant no more than Seneca intends by his " felices " animæ et æterna fortitæ," which yet were to be conſumed at the general conflagration. But as to the common kind of ſouls, they were in the opinion of many of the Stoics, to be immediately re-

(*x*) Epictet. Diſſert. book iii. chap. 13. ſect. 1.

(*y*) Senec. in Conſol. ad Marciam, in fine.

funded

funded into the "anima mundi," and thereby loſe their individual exiſtence much ſooner (z).

(z) It is to be obſerved that theſe periodical conflagrations were deſigned to be ſo many renovations of the world. All things were to be refunded into the divine ſubſtance in order to their being produced anew. Many of the Stoics ſuppoſed, that then the ſame order and courſe of things in every reſpect would be repeated which was before: the very ſame perſons would appear again on this earthly ſtage, and act their whole former life again, exactly in the ſame manner as they had done before, and be ſubject in every thing to the ſame events and accidents. Others who ſaw the inconveniency of this, explained it not of the very ſame individual perſons, but of other perſons perfectly ſimilar to them, and exactly reſembling them in their characters, actions, and all the circumſtances which attended them. They held that ſuch revolutions always have been, and always ſhall be repeated in a perpetual ſucceſſion throughout an infinite duration, and they ſuppoſed them to be the effects of a phyſical neceſſity *. It is evident that upon this hypotheſis, there could be no proper ſtate of future retributions. The ſame face and ſtate of things is continually to return at certain periods: and the preſent ſeemingly unequal diſpenſations of Providence to be repeated and renewed.

It may not be improper to obſerve here, that the notion of ſucceſſive diſſolutions and renovations of the world has penetrated to the fartheſt parts of the Eaſt, and perhaps from the Eaſt it was originally derived. F. Longobardi, whom I have cited before, in his treatiſe concerning the learned ſect in China, obſerves that it is a doctrine of theirs, that when the years of the world's continuance are at an end, this univerſe will expire and all things in it, even all ſpirits will then have an end, and among the reſt Tien Chu, and Xangti, the Lord of Heaven, or King of the upper Region: all things ſhall return to the firſt principle, which ſhall produce another world after the ſame manner. And this alſo ending, another will ſucceed, and ſo another without end. And he obſerves, that the interval between the beginning and end of the world is called by them the great year. See F. Longobardi's treatiſe in the fifth book of Navarette's account of the Empire of China, p. 184. The Stoics alſo called the interval between the periodical conflagrations the great year. Euſeb. Præp. Evang. lib. xv. cap. 19.

* Concerning this ſee Numenius apud Euſeb. Præpar. Evangel. lib. xv. cap 18 et 19. And Nemeſ. de Fato, cap. 38.——The reader may ſee theſe and other teſtimonies produced by the learned author of the Critical Enquiry, improved, ch. v. — To this Antoninus refers, when he talks of the periodical renovation of the whole or of the univerſe—Τὸ περιέχον παλιγγενεσίαν τῶν ὅλων. Anton. Medit. book xi. ſect. 1. See alſo ibid. book v. ſect. 13. 32. and book x. ſect. 7.

The three moſt eminent Stoics, whoſe writings are come down to us, are Seneca, Epictetus, and the emperor Marcus Antoninus. As to the firſt of theſe great men, he ſeems to have been ſtrangely unſettled in his notions with regard to the immortality of the ſoul, and a future ſtate. Sometimes he ſpeaks in a clear and noble manner of the happineſs of ſouls after death, when freed from the incumbrance of the body, and received into the place or region of departed ſouls. See his Conſol. ad Polyb. cap. 28. et Conſol. ad Marc. cap. 25. But eſpecially his 102d epiſtle to Lucilius, where he has ſome ſublime thoughts on this ſubject; and among other things declares, that the laſt day of this preſent life is to be regarded as the birth-day of an eternal one. "Dies "iſte quem tanquam extremum reformidas æterni natalis eſt." At other times he expreſſes himſelf with great doubt and uncertainty. In that very epiſtle to Lucilius, he repreſents it as a kind of pleaſing dream, and that it was an opinion embraced by great men, very agreeable indeed, but which they promiſed rather than proved. "Credebam facile opinionibus magnorum virorum rem "gratiſſimam promittentium magis quam probantium." And in his ſixty-third epiſtle, "perhaps, ſaith he, if the report of wiſe "men be true, and ſome place receives us after death, he whom "we think to have periſhed is only ſent before." "Fortaſſe, ſi "modo ſapientum vera fama eſt, recipitque nos locus aliquis, "quem putamus periſſe, præmiſſus eſt." And again, in his ſeventy-ſixth epiſtle, "If it be ſo, ſays he, that ſouls remain "after they are ſet looſe from the body, a happier ſtate awaits "them, than whilſt they are in the body." "Si modo ſolutæ

"corporibus

" corporibus animæ manent, felicior illis ſtatus reſtat, quàm eſt " dum verſantur in corpore."

Theſe, and other paſſages of the like kind, ſhew the doubt and uncertainty he was in; but he ſometimes carries it farther, and ſeems plainly to deny that the ſoul has any exiſtence after death, or at leaſt that it has any ſenſe of good or evil. What he ſays in his 55th epiſtle to Lucilius is very remarkable to this purpoſe. He tells him of a violent diſorder which ſeized him on a ſudden, and ſeemed to threaten immediate death. And he informs him what the thoughts were which ſupported and comforted him, even when he was, as he thought, in his laſt agony: " Ego vero et in " ipſa ſuffocatione non deſii cogitationibus lætis ac fortibus acqui- " eſcere." And what was it that yielded him comfort in a dying hour? Was it the hope of a happy immortal exiſtence beyond the grave, of which he ſometimes ſpeaks in magnificent terms? No; but it was the thought, that he ſhould be in the ſame inſenſible ſtate after death that he was in before he was born, and ſhould return to a ſtate of non-exiſtence (*a*). " I have had long expe-

(*a*) " Ego illam [mortem] diu expertus ſum. Quamdiu, inquis? Antequàm " naſcerer. Mors eſt non eſſe: id quale ſit, jam ſcio: hoc erit poſt me, quod " ante me fuit: ſiquid in hâc re tormenti eſt, neceſſe erit, et fuiſſe antequam pro- " diremus in lucem. Atqui nullam ſenſimus tunc vexationem. Rogo, non ſtul- " tiſſimum dicas, ſiquis exiſtimet lucernæ pejus eſſe cum extincta eſt, quam ante- " quam accenderetur? Nos quoque et accendimur et extinguimur: medio illo " tempore aliquid patimur: utrobique autem alta ſecuritas eſt. In hoc enim, mi " Lucili, niſi fallor, erramus, quod mortem judicamus ſequi, quum illa et præ- " ceſſerit, et ſecutura ſit. Quicquid ante nos fuit mors eſt. Quid enim refert " utrùm non incipias, an deſinas? Utriuſque rei hic eſt effectus, non eſſe." Senec. epiſt. 55. edit. Commelin. 1594.

" rience of death (ſays he). How long? ſay you. Before I was " born. Death is not to be: what that is, I already know. " That ſhall be after me which was before me. If there be any " torment in this, we muſt needs have experienced it, before we " came into the light. But we then felt no vexation. Would " you not think it a very fooliſh thing, if any man ſhould think " that the candle is in a worſe condition after it is put out, than " before it was lighted? We alſo are lighted and extinguiſhed. " We ſuffer ſomething in the interval between theſe, but both " before and after there is a profound ſecurity. For in this, my " Lucilius, if I be not miſtaken, we err, that we imagine death " only to follow, whereas it both went before this life, and ſhall " follow after it. Whatſoever was before us is death. For where " is the difference between not beginning to be at all, and ceaſing " to exiſt? The effect of both is the ſame, not to be." He repeats the ſame thought in Conſol. ad Polyb. cap. 27. as alſo in Conſol. ad Marciam, cap. 19. where he abſolutely rejects the notion of future puniſhments, and aſſerts, that a dead man is affected with no evils, but is in the ſame ſtate of tranquillity he was in before he was born (*b*). Again he ſays, that no ſenſe of evil can reach to him that is dead: which he proves, becauſe nothing can hurt him who is not. " Nullum mali ſenſum ad eum

(*b*) Torquatus the Epicurean, who defends the Epicurean ſyſtem in Cicero's firſt book De Finibus, talks after the ſame manner: " Robuſtus et excellens ani- " mus, omni eſt liber curâ et angore, cum et mortem contemnit, quâ qui adfecti " ſunt, in eâdem cauſâ ſunt quâ, antequam nati, et ad dolores ita paratus eſt, ut " meminerit maxumos morte finiri." De Finib. lib. i. cap. 15. p. 50. edit. Davis.

" qui

" qui perit pervenire; nam ſi pervenit non periit, nulla inquam, " eum res lædit qui nullus eſt (*c*)."

That excellent Stoic Epictetus never takes any notice of a future ſtate of rewards and puniſhments; though, had he been perſuaded of the truth of them, the ſubjects he treats of would have led him to mention them: eſpecially conſidering that he treats things in a popular way, and deſigned his philoſophy not merely for ſpeculation, but for uſe. He frequently aſſerts, as I had occaſion to obſerve before, that a good man needs no other reward than his own goodneſs and virtue, nor has the wicked man any other puniſhment than his own vices. And the comfort he gives againſt death is, that it is natural and neceſſary; and therefore can be no evil, for all evils may be avoided. He elſewhere obſerves, that at death we go to nothing dreadful. We then return to the elements of which we were made, fire, air, earth, and water. There is no Hades, nor Acheron, nor Cocytus, nor Pyriphlegethon: but all is full of gods and dæmons (*d*).

That great emperor and philoſopher Marcus Antoninus, always expreſſes himſelf very doubtfully on this point, as the learned Gataker, who was ſo well acquainted with his works, and his great admirer, obſerves, " De ſtatu animorum poſt mortem ambigendo " paſſim Marcus ſermonem inſtituit (*e*)." And again, " De animi

(*c*) Sen. epiſt. 99.

(*d*) Epict. Diſſert. book iii. chap. 13. ſect. 15.

(*e*) Gataker Annot. in Anton. p. 90.

" ſtatu

" ſtatu poſt mortem incertus fluctuat paſſim Marcus (*f*)." He generally ſpeaks of it waveringly, and in a way of alternative. " Concerning death (ſays he) it is either a diſperſion, or atoms, " or exinanition, κένωσις, or an extinction, or a tranſlation to an- " other ſtate." Ἤτοι σβέσις ἢ μετάστασις (*g*). And again, " Re- " member (ſays he) that either this corporeal mixture muſt be " diſperſed, or that the ſpirit of life muſt be either extinguiſhed " or removed, and brought into another place (*h*)." And in an- other paſſage he ſuppoſes, that " as dead bodies, after remaining " a while in the earth, are changed and diſſipated, to make room " for other bodies, ſo the animal ſouls removed to the air, after " they have remained ſome time, are changed, diffuſed, re- " kindled, and reſumed into the original productive ſpirit, [εἰς " τὸν τῶν ὅλων σπερματικὸν λόγον, into the ſeminal reaſon of the " univerſe] and give place to other ſouls in like manner to " cohabit with them." He adds, That " this anſwer may be " made on ſuppoſition that the ſouls ſurvive their bodies (*i*)." Gataker obſerves in his annotations upon this paſſage, that An- toninus does not ſeem here to think that ſouls ſhall continue to the conflagration, but ſhall be extinguiſhed or reſumed ſooner, that they may give place to other ſouls. And he adds, That " the Stoics " dreamed of one common univerſal ſoul, from whence all other " ſouls were as it were cut off, or which was a kind of fountain

(*f*) Gataker Annot. in Anton. p. 423.

(*g*) Anton. Medit. book vii. ſect. 32.

(*h*) Ibid. book viii. ſect. 25.

(*i*) Ibid. book iv. ſect. 21. Glaſgow tranſlation.

" of

" of all the reſt, and into which they were all to be again re-
" funded (*k*)." I ſhall only mention one paſſage more of Antoninus, in which after having ſaid, " I conſiſt of an active and
" a material principle," he adds, " every part of me ſhall be diſ-
" poſed, upon its diſſolution, into the correſpondent part of the
" univerſe; and that again ſhall be changed into ſome other part
" of the univerſe, and thus to eternity (*l*)." To this may be added, what was taken notice of before, that neither Antoninus nor Epictetus ever give the leaſt hint of men's being judged or called to an account after death for their conduct in this life, or that the wicked ſhall be puniſhed in a future ſtate.

It is obſerved by the celebrated Monſ. de Monteſquieu, That
" the religion of Confucius denies the immortality of the ſoul,
" and the ſect of Zeno did not believe it."—" La religion de
" Confucius nie l'immortalité de l'ame, et la ſecte de Zenon ne
" la croyoit pas (*m*)." I have already conſidered the ſentiments of the ſect of Zeno on this head. As to the famous Chineſe philoſopher Confucius and his diſciples, who, like the Stoics, have always profeſſed to make morals their chief ſtudy, it appears by the beſt accounts which are given of them, that they do not acknowledge the immortality of the ſoul and a ſtate of future retri-

(*k*) " Unam animam communem et univerſalem ſomniabant Stoici, unde reliquæ
" omnes eſſent quaſi deciſæ, ſive quæ reliquarum omnium fons quidam exiſteret,
" in quem etiam denuò quaſi refunderentur." Gat. Annot. in Antonin. p. 141.

(*l*) Anton. Med. book v. ſect. 13. See alſo book vii. ſect. 10.

(*m*) L'Eſprit des Loix, Vol. II. liv. 24. chap. 19. p. 166. edit. Edinb.

butions. Father Navarette, who was a long time in China, and well acquainted with their books, affirms, that Confucius knew nothing of the rewards and puniſhments of another life (*n*). He alſo obſerves concerning the ſecond great Chineſe philoſopher Meng Zu, who lived one hundred years after Confucius, and to whom the Chineſe erect temples, holding him in great veneration next to Confucius, that he has admirable moral ſentences; but in his books there is not the leaſt appearance of his having the knowledge of God, of the immortality of the ſoul, and the rewards and puniſhments of a future life: and he would have mentioned this in his writings, if he had found any ſuch thing in the doctrine of Confucius, which he diligently learned and ſtudied (*o*). The ſame author obſerves, that the Chineſe often ſpeak of heaven's rewarding the virtuous, and puniſhing the wicked; but that moſt certain it is, that they ſpeak not of what is in the other life, but in this. They look upon rewards and puniſhments to be the natural and neceſſary attendants of virtue and vice, which accompany them as the ſhadow does the body (*p*). F. Longobardi, in the treatiſe I have cited before, ſays it is the general opinion of the Chineſe, that he who does well ſhall be naturally and of neceſſity rewarded, and he that does ill puniſhed; as he is warmed that draws near the fire, and he grows cold that is in the ſnow (*q*).

(*n*) See his Account of the Empire of China, in the firſt volume of Churchill's Collection of Travels and Voyages, p. 113.

(*o*) Ibid. p. 139.

(*p*) Ibid. p. 137, 138.

(*q*) Ibid. p. 185.

The

The ſame father ſhews, both from their caſſical books of greateſt authority, and from the unanimous profeſſion of the moſt learned mandarins, that the doctrine of future rewards and puniſhments is not received or acknowledged by the learned ſect. Speaking of himſelf and other miſſionaries that were with him, he ſays, " We aſked doctor King Lun Ju, a mandarin of the court of rites, " whether, according to the ſect of the learned, there was any re- " ward or puniſhment in the other life? He laughed at the queſtion; " and then anſwered, that it could not be denied that there were " virtues and vices in this world; but that all ended with death, " when the man in whom were theſe things expired: and there- " fore there was no need of providing for the next life, but only " for this." F. Longobardi produces ſeveral other teſtimonies to the ſame purpoſe, which I need not particularly mention, and declares, that he had often converſed with their moſt learned mandarins in ſeveral parts of China during the time he reſided there, and found that they all agreed unanimouſly in this (*r*). He alſo mentions

(*r*) Navarette's Account of the Empire of China, in the firſt volume of Churchill's Collection of Voyages and Travels, p. 197, 198. I ſhall on this occaſion mention what a mandarin ſaid to F. Matth. Riccio, when he diſcourſed with him about the Chriſtian faith, and eternal life. After having treated what the father had ſaid concerning a future ſtate as nothing but talk and vain words, which the wind driveth away, the mandarin plainly declared, that he looked for no higher happineſs than what ariſeth from things preſent and viſible. " What we ſee (ſaid he) is " the advantage of governing and commanding others. Gold, ſilver, wives and " concubines, as alſo a numerous train, goods, feaſtings, diverſions, and all ſorts " of happineſs, honour and glory, are the conſequences of being a mandarin. " This is the happineſs we covet, and which we enjoy in our great and mighty " empire; and not the happineſs you talk of, which is as unprofitable as it is in- " viſible, and impoſſible to obtain." And in this he ſeems to have ſpoke the ſenſe of the mandarins in general. Theſe notions of theirs have a very bad influence on

mentions a converſation he had with Dr. Michael, a learned Chineſe Chriſtian, who himſelf was of the ſect of the learned, and perfectly well acquainted with their tenets, and was one of thoſe who were willing, as far as poſſible, to interpret them ſo as to bring them to a conformity with the Chriſtian doctrine. Being aſked by the father, " Whether after death there be any rewards " or puniſhments for good or wicked men according to the doc- " trine of the learned ſect? He anſwered, they make no mention " of any ſuch things. Here he ſighed, and complained of the " profeſſors of that ſect, for not teaching the things of another " life: which, ſaid he, is the cauſe that the multitude is not en- " couraged to practiſe virtue in earneſt. And he commended the " ſect of Foe for preaching up heaven and hell (*s*)."

Confucius being aſked by one of his diſciples, What angels or ſpirits are, anſwered, That they are air. And this is the notion that the Chineſe have of the ſoul. They look upon it to be a

their moral conduct. As they look upon the enjoyment of this preſent world, its riches, honours, and pleaſures, to be the higheſt and only happineſs, they ſtick at no methods, how unfair or unjuſt ſoever, to obtain them. It is agreed by all, even by thoſe that are moſt prejudiced in favour of the Chineſe, that though the learned mandarins ſpeak highly of virtue, and profeſs to make the doctrine of morals, and the good order of the ſtate in general, and the happineſs of each particular perſon, their whole ſtudy, there is a great and general corruption among them, and little regard is had to juſtice and honeſty, but every thing is carried by the force of money at their tribunals. See, among others, Gemelli Carreri's Account of China, in his Voyage round the World, Part IV. book ii. chap. 4. p. 310. and ibid. chap. vii. p. 328. 330. in Churchill's Collection of Travels, &c. Vol. IV.

(*s*) Navarette's Account of the Empire of China, in the firſt volume of Churchill's Collection of Travels and Voyages, p. 197.

material

material thing, though highly rarefied: and that when the ſoul is ſeparated from the body, both of them loſe the individual being they had before, and nothing remains but the ſubſtance of heaven and earth, which had before concurred to the compoſition of man, and which, as general cauſes, ever continue in their ſubſtantial being, and are only changed in their accidental forms (*t*).

This may ſuffice concerning the opinions of the learned ſect in China, with reſpect to the immortality of the ſoul, and a future ſtate of retributions. The reader may alſo conſult to the ſame purpoſe a tract of a Chineſe philoſopher in Du Halde's collection of Chineſe pieces, in the third volume of his Hiſtory of China.

(*t*) Navarette's Account of the Empire of China, in the firſt volume of Churchill's Collection of Travels and Voyages, p. 195.

CHAP.

CHAP. IV.

Concerning the philoſophers who profeſſed to believe and teach the immortality of the ſoul. Of theſe Pythagoras is generally eſteemed one of the moſt eminent. His doctrine on this head ſhewn to be not well conſiſtent with a ſtate of future rewards and puniſhments. Socrates believed the immortality of the ſoul and a future ſtate, and argued for it. In this he was followed by Plato. The doctrine of Cicero with regard to the immortality of the ſoul conſidered. As alſo that of Plutarch.

IT ſufficiently appears, from what was obſerved in the former chapter, what confuſion there was among the Heathen philoſophers, with regard to the doctrine of the immortality of the ſoul and a future ſtate: that great numbers of them abſolutely denied it; and others treated it as a mere uncertainty, and did not teach it as a doctrine of their ſchools.

But then it muſt be acknowledged, that there were other celebrated philoſophers whoſe profeſſed tenet it was that the ſoul is immortal. This is ſaid to have been the doctrine of the Perſian Magi, and the Indian Gymnoſophiſts (*u*). But what I ſhall particularly conſider is the doctrine of thoſe among the Greek philoſophers, who held the immortality of the ſoul. Of theſe the

(*u*) Concerning the Indian Gymnoſophiſts, and the wrong uſe they and others made of this doctrine, ſee what is ſaid above, p. 219, 220. of this volume.

moſt

moſt eminent were the Pythagoreans and Platoniſts. Let us therefore enquire into their ſentiments on this head, and whether they were likely to lead the people into right notions concerning it, and which might be of real ſervice to the cauſe of religion and virtue.

The Pythagoreans were generally reckoned among the moſt ſtrenuous aſſerters of the immortality of the ſoul: but in aſſerting it they went upon a wrong principle. Pythagoras, as was obſerved before (*x*), taught that the ſoul was a part of the divinity or univerſal ſoul, which was every-where diffuſed; and in this, as Cicero aſſures us, he was followed by all the Pythagoreans (*y*). And hence he argued, that the ſoul is immortal; becauſe that out of which it is diſcerped is immortal (*z*). Plutarch aſſerts, that Pythagoras and Plato held, that the ſoul is immortal or incorruptible; "becauſe when it departs out of the body, it goes to "the ſoul of the univerſe, to that which is congenial with itſelf." Πρὸς τὸ ὁμογενὲς (*a*). But then this returning into the ſoul of the world muſt not be underſtood, according to Pythagoras's notion, to take place immediately, till after the ſoul had gone through ſeveral tranſmigrations. For it is a known doctrine of his, that the ſouls of men after death tranſmigrate from one body to another, and even to the bodies of beaſts as well as men. Porphyry,

(*x*) See here above, Vol. I. chap. xii.

(*y*) Cic. Cato Major, cap. 21. et De Nat. Deor. lib. i. cap. 11.

(*z*) Laert. lib. viii. ſegm. 28.

(*a*) Plutarch. de Placit. Philoſ. lib. iv. cap. 7.

after

after having obſerved that what Pythagoras delivered to his auditors, i. e. to his own proper diſciples, cannot be certainly affirmed, for there was a great and ſtrict ſilence obſerved amongſt them, ſays, that his doctrines known to all are theſe: firſt, that "the ſoul is immortal, then that it enters into other kinds of "living creatures." He held alſo, that "after certain periods, "the things that were formerly done are done over again." Or, as Mr. Stanley renders it, "the ſame things that are now gene-"rated are generated again, and that there is nothing abſolutely "new: and that all animals are near a-kin, and of a like "kind (*b*)."

Diodorus Siculus affirms, that he learned his doctrine of the tranſmigration of ſouls from the Egyptians (*c*). And Herodotus informs us, that the antient Egyptians ſaid, "that the ſoul of man "is immortal, and that the body being corrupted, the ſoul goes "into the body of one animal after another, and after it has gone "round, περιέλθῃ, or performed its circuit, through all terreſtrial "and marine animals and birds, it again entereth into ſome human "body, and that this circuit or circumvolution was completed in "three thouſand years." He adds, that this opinion ſome of the Greeks uſurped, as if it was their own invention, and that he knew their names, but choſe not to mention them, in which probably he had a particular view to Pythagoras (*d*). This tranſ-

(*b*) Porphyr. Vita Pythag.

(*c*) Biblioth. lib. i. p. 86. et Euſeb. Præpar. Evangel. lib. x. cap. 8. p. 482.

(*d*) Herod. lib. ii.

migration of ſouls taught by the Egyptians, as here repreſented by Herodotus, ſeems to be phyſical, and neceſſary by a natural and fatal neceſſity, and is a quite different thing from a future ſtate of rewards and puniſhments deſigned for moral purpoſes. Agreeable to this is the repreſentation Laertius makes of Pythagoras's doctrine, That " the ſoul, paſſing through the circle of neceſſity, lives at " ſeveral times in different living creatures (*e*)." But he is miſtaken in ſuppoſing Pythagoras to have been the firſt author of this doctrine, for the Egyptians had taught it before him. But though this tranſmigration as taught by the Egyptians, according to Herodotus, was natural and neceſſary, yet they endeavoured ſo to explain it, as to apply it to moral purpoſes. And ſo alſo Pythagoras ſeems to have done, at leaſt in his popular diſcourſes. Laertius tells us, that " he held that the ſoul being caſt out upon the earth, " wanders in the air, like to a body, and that Mercury is the " keeper and conductor of ſouls, and brings them out of bodies, " both from the earth and ſea: and that pure ſouls are led into " high places; but that the impure neither come near to them, " nor to one another, but are bound by the furies in indiſſoluble " chains (*f*)." Theodoret repreſents it as his opinion as well as that of Plato, that " ſouls are præ-exiſtent to bodies, and that thoſe which " tranſgreſs are ſent again into bodies, that being purified by ſuch " diſcipline, they may return to their own place: that thoſe which " whilſt they are in the body lead a wicked life, are ſent down " farther into irrational creatures, hereby to receive puniſhment

(*e*) Laert. lib. viii. ſegm. 14.

(*f*) Ibid. ſegm. 31.

" and right expiation; the angry and malicious into ſerpents, the " ravenous into wolves, the audacious into lions, the fraudulent " into foxes, and the like (*g*)." Timæus the Locrian, an eminent Pythagorean, in that celebrated paſſage at the end of his treatiſe of the Soul of the world, gives pretty much the ſame account. That " ſouls tranſmigrate or change their habitations: " thoſe of the cowards and effeminate are thruſt into the bodies of " women; thoſe of murderers, into the bodies of ſavage beaſts; " the laſcivious, into the forms of boars or ſwine; the vain and " inconſtant are changed into birds, and the ſlothful and ignorant " into fiſhes (*b*)." He repreſents it as neceſſary to teach theſe things to the people, and to inſtil into them the dread of foreign torments: though he plainly intimates, that they were falſe relations, and that he himſelf did not believe them to be literally true, which probably was the caſe of Pythagoras himſelf. Ovid, in his Metamorphoſis, introduces Pythagoras as delivering his doctrine to the people of Crotona, and repreſents him as directing them not to be afraid of puniſhments after death, of Styx, darkneſs, vain names, and falſe terrors: that they were not to think that the body can feel any evil; and as to the ſouls, they are immortal, and are always changing their habitations, and leaving their former abodes, are received into new ones.

" O genus attonitum ſtolidæ formidine mortis!
" Quid Styga, quid tenebras, et nomina vana timetis,

(*g*) Stanley's Hiſtory of Philoſophy, p. 559. edit. 2d, Lond.

(*b*) The reader may ſee the whole paſſage quoted from the original, and elegantly tranſlated. Divine Legation of Moſes, Vol. II. book iii. p. 143, 144. edit. 4th.

" Materiem

" Materiem vatum, falſique piacula mundi?
" Corpora ſive rogus flamma, ſeu tabe vetuſtas
" Abſtulerit, mala poſſe pati non ulla putetis.
" Morte carent animæ, ſemperque priore relictâ
" Sede, novis domibus vivunt, habitantque receptæ."

Metamorph. lib. xv. ver. 153. et ſeq.

Mr. Sandys tranſlates it thus:

" O you, whom horrors of cold death affright,
" Why fear you Styx, vain names, and endleſs night,
" The dreams of poets, and feigned miſeries
" Of forged hell? Whether laſt flames ſurprize,
" Or age devours your bodies; they nor grieve,
" Nor ſuffer pain. Our ſouls for ever live:
" Yet evermore their antient houſes leave
" To live in new, which them as gueſts receive."

Ovid here repreſents Pythagoras as maintaining perpetual tranſmigrations of the ſoul into other bodies, and this by a kind of phyſical neceſſity: which ſeems not well to conſiſt with what Plutarch gives as Pythagoras's opinion, that the ſoul, when it departs out of the body, recedes to the ſoul of the world, as being of the ſame kind with it.

It is farther to be obſerved, that though Pythagoras ſeemed to make a tranſmigration into other bodies common and neceſſary to all ſouls; yet he made an exception in favour of ſome highly privileged ſouls, as if they were exempted from the common law

and neceſſity to which others are ſubject. Laertius repreſents it as one of his tenets, that ſome ſouls become dæmons and heroes (*i*). And the golden verſes of Pythagoras, which contain a ſummary of his moral doctrine, conclude with promiſing to him who ſhould obey his precepts, that he ſhould, upon leaving the body, go into the free æther, and become an immortal god, incorruptible, and no more obnoxious to death.

Whoſoever impartially conſiders and compares the different accounts that are given us of the Pythagoric doctrine, will find it very difficult to form them into a conſiſtent ſcheme. Plutarch, as was before obſerved, repreſents it as Pythagoras's opinion, that the ſouls of men return to the univerſal ſoul, out of which they were taken, immediately upon their quitting the body (*k*). But if that were the caſe, it muſt be ſaid, either that there are no tranſmigrations at all, which is contrary to Pythagoras's known opinion, or that after the ſoul has been for a while re-united to the univerſal ſoul of the world, it is again ſeparated from it, in order to ani-

(*i*) Laert. lib. viii. ſegm. 32. Plutarch aſcribes the ſame opinion, not only to Pythagoras, but to Thales, Plato, and the Stoics. De Placit. Philoſ. lib. i. cap. 8. Oper. tom. II. p. 882. edit. Xyl.

(*k*) In like manner Numenius repreſents it as the doctrine of ſome of the Stoics, who, as well as the Pythagoreans, held the refuſion of the ſoul into the univerſal nature, that "the ſoul of the univerſe was eternal, and other ſouls would be "mixed with it at death, ἐπὶ τελευτῇ." Apud Euſeb. Præp. Evang lib. xv. cap. 20. And Antoninus in a paſſage cited above, p. 329. ſuppoſes that ſouls ſhall continue after leaving the body, for ſome ſhort time in the air, and then be reſumed into the univerſal ſoul. And he elſewhere ſpeaks of the reſumption of the active principle, or the ſoul, into the intelligence of the whole, as done τάχιστα, "very "ſoon, quam celerrime," as Gataker renders it. Anton. lib. vii. ſect. 10.

mate

mate other bodies, and undergo different tranſmigrations. Others repreſent Pythagoras's doctrine, as if the tranſmigration of ſouls were to commence immediately upon their departure out of the body, and that after having accompliſhed the courſe of tranſmigrations appointed them, they ſhould be refunded into the univerſal ſoul.

Some authors who in this as well as other inſtances affix Chriſtian ideas to the paſſages they meet with in Pagan authors, have repreſented this refuſion of the ſoul as a ſtate of complete happineſs, peculiar to the ſouls of good men, and conſiſting in the beatific viſion and enjoyment of the Deity. But this is not the idea the Pagan writers themſelves give us of it. The learned and ingenious author of the Critical Enquiry, &c. whom I have before referred to, has proved by expreſs teſtimonies, that this refuſion of the ſoul was not ſuppoſed to be a privilege peculiar to the righteous and innocent; that all ſouls without diſtinction were to be abſorbed at length into the univerſal ſoul, and that this refuſion was of a phyſical nature, not properly for any moral purpoſe or deſign, but to furniſh the "anima mundi" with materials for the reproduction and renovation of things (*l*). If there were any happineſs for departed ſouls, it was to be before the refuſion, which was ſuppoſed to put an end to their ſeparate individual exiſtence (*m*). Seneca has a remarkable paſſage in his 72d epiſtle, which

(*l*) See Critical Enquiry into the Opinions of the Antients, &c. chap. 5.

(*m*) They explained it, as an eminent writer obſerves, by a bottle filled with ſea-water, which, ſwimming a while upon the ocean, does upon the bottle's breaking

which it is proper to mention here. " Magnus animus Deo " pareat, et quicquid lex univerſi jubet ſine cunctatione patiatur. " Aut in meliorem emittitur vitam, lucidiùs tranquilliùſque inter " divina manſurus, aut certè ſine ullo futurus incommodo, na- " turæ ſuæ remiſcebitur, et revertitur in totum." Where he repreſents it as the part of a great mind chearfully to ſubmit to what the law of the univerſe requires, and that either he ſhall go free into a better life, where he ſhall remain in a luminous and ſerene abode among the gods, or he ſhall without any evil or inconvenience be remingled with his nature, and return into the whole. The utmoſt that he ſays of this re-union to the whole, is that the ſoul ſhall then be without any evil or inconvenience, " animus ſine " ullo futurus incommodo," which, as the learned author of the Enquiry obſerves, is the account he elſewhere gives of death, on ſuppoſition of its being an extinction of our individual exiſtence. " Death, ſays he, brings no evil or inconvenience along with it;

breaking mingle with the common maſs. To this purpoſe he cites a remarkable paſſage from Gaſſendus, in which that very learned author ſays, " Vix ulli fuere " (quæ humanæ mentis caligo et imbecillitas eſt) qui non inciderint in errorem " illum de refuſione in animam mundi. Nimirum ſicut exiſtimarunt ſingulorum " animas particulas eſſe animæ mundanæ, quarum quæ libet ſuo corpore, ut aqua " vaſe includitur, ita et reputârunt unamquamque animam, corpore diſſoluto, quaſi " diffracto vaſe effluere, atque animæ mundi è quâ deducta fuerit iterum uniri." See divine Legation, vol. II. book iii. ſect. 4. p. 205, 206. 4th edition. Tertullian indeed tells us, that the Egyptian Hermes taught that the ſoul, when departed from the body, is not refunded into the nature of the univerſe, but retains its diſtinct determinate exiſtence. " Mercurius Ægyptius animam digreſſam a corpore " non refundi in naturam univerſi, ſed manere determinatam." Tertul. de Anima, cap. 33. But beſides that Triſmegiſtus's writings are of ſuſpected authority, it is here plainly implied, that if the human ſoul was refunded into the univerſal ſoul, which certainly was the common opinion of the Pagan philoſophers, it would loſe its individual exiſtence.

" for

" for that muſt have an exiſtence which is ſubject to any incon-
" venience." " Mors nullum habet incommodum: eſſe enim
" debet aliquid, cujus ſit incommodum." Epiſt. 34. Pythagoras indeed ſuppoſed, as the Stoics did afterwards, that all things that were done in the former world were to be done again, when the ſoul of the univerſe was to go forth into new productions, and form another world at ſtated periodical revolutions, or at the end of the great year: but this was the effect of a phyſical neceſſity, and without any reſpect in a way of moral retribution to the good or evil actions which had been done in the former world.

I think therefore it may be juſtly ſaid, that the doctrine of the immortality of the ſoul in the ſenſe in which Pythagoras taught it, could be of no great advantage to mankind, with regard to the belief of a future ſtate of rewards and puniſhments. And though thoſe of his ſchool generally ſo far aſſerted the immortality of the ſoul as to maintain that it did not die with the body, but lived to animate other bodies, yet ſome of them ſuppoſed death to be common to the ſoul and body, and expreſſed themſelves in a manner which has a near affinity with the doctrine of Epicurus. This is what the learned author of the Critical Enquiry has ſhewn, to whom I refer the reader (*n*).

I ſhall conclude what relates to Pythagoras with obſerving, that we cannot lay any ſtreſs upon the doctrines he publickly taught, as containing his real ſentiments, becauſe he made no ſcruple of

(*n*) See the Critical Enquiry, &c. chap. i. p. 4, 5, 6. 1ſt. edit.

impoſing

impoſing upon the people things which he himſelf could not but know were falſe, and which, we may be ſure, he did not himſelf believe. Several inſtances of his frauds might be produced; but I ſhall only mention one relating to his celebrated doctrine of the tranſmigration of ſouls. Not content with affirming that doctrine in general, he pretended to mention the ſeveral tranſmigrations which he himſelf had undergone, and to name the particular perſons whom his ſoul had animated in a ſucceſſion of ſome ages, and that he himſelf had a diſtinct remembrance of it.

Let us next proceed to take ſome notice of Socrates and Plato, who are generally regarded as the principal of the antient Pagan philoſophers before the coming of our Saviour, who taught the immortality of the ſoul and a future ſtate. As to Socrates, the learned Biſhop of Glouceſter acknowledges that he really believed not only the immortality of the ſoul, but a ſtate of future rewards and puniſhments, though he ſeems not willing to allow that any of the other antient philoſophers believed it (*o*). His ſentiments are moſt fully repreſented in Plato's Phædo, which contains the diſcourſe he had with his friends the laſt day of his life, and in which he ſets himſelf to prove the immortality of the ſoul. And though it is probable that Plato in this dialogue very much enlarges upon what Socrates then ſaid to his friends and diſciples, yet he had too great a regard to decency to put any thing upon him on ſuch an occaſion, but what was agreeable to his known ſentiments. And if he had done ſo, others would not have failed

(*o*) Divine Legation of Moſes, &c. vol. II. book iii. ſect. 4. p. 235. 4th edit.

to expoſe him for it. The ſame may be ſaid of Socrates's apology as delivered by Plato.

In the beginning of the Phædo Socrates declares to Cebes and the others who then came to ſee him, that did he not think that he ſhould go to wiſe and juſt Gods, and to men that had departed this life, and who were better than thoſe who were then living upon the earth, it would be wrong in him not to be troubled at death; " but know aſſuredly, ſays he, that I hope I " am now going to good men, though this I would not take " upon me peremptorily to aſſert: but that I ſhall go to the gods, " lords that are abſolutely good, this, if I can affirm any thing " of this kind, I would certainly affirm. And for this reaſon I do " not take it ill that I am to die, as otherwiſe I ſhould do; but " am in good hope that there is ſomething remaining for thoſe " that are dead, and that (as it hath been ſaid of old) it will then " be much better for good than for bad men." He then propoſes to offer reaſons, why a man that had all his life applied himſelf to philoſophy ſhould expect death with confidence, and ſhould entertain good hope that he ſhould obtain the beſt of good things after his departure out of this life (*p*).

In other parts of that dialogue Socrates ſays excellent things concerning the happineſs to be enjoyed in a future ſtate. But then he ſeems to regard this as the ſpecial privilege of thoſe who having an earneſt thirſt after knowledge addicted themſelves to

(*p*) Plato Oper. p. 377. H. 378. A, B. edit. Lugd.

the ſtudy of philoſophy. He talks of the ſoul's going at its departure hence, " into a place like itſelf, noble, pure, inviſible, to a " wiſe and good God, whither, ſays he, if it pleaſes God, my " ſoul ſhall ſoon go (*q*)." And again, that " the ſoul which " gives itſelf up to the ſtudy of wiſdom and philoſophy, and lives " abſtracted from the body, goes at death to that which is like " itſelf, divine, immortal, wiſe, to which when it arrives, it ſhall " be happy, freed from error, ignorance, fears, diſorderly loves, " ἀνθρώπων ἐρώτων, and other human evils, and lives, as is ſaid of " the initiated, the reſt of its life with the gods (*r*)." He adds, that they who only minded the body and its appetites and pleaſures, having ſomething in them ponderous and earthy, ſhall after their departure out of the body be drawn down to the earth, and hover about the ſepulchres, being puniſhed for their former ill-ſpent life, τὴν δίκην τίνεσαι τῆς προτέρας τροφῆς, till having ſtill a hankering after corporeal nature they enter again into bodies, ſuited to their former manners: thoſe who were wholly given to their belly and to intemperance, enter into the bodies of aſſes and other like beaſts; the tyrannical, injurious, and rapacious into the bodies of wolves, hawks, kites, &c. (*s*); but that thoſe of them are the happieſt and go to the beſt place, who diligently practiſe the popular and civil virtue, which is called temperance and juſtice, having acquired it by cuſtom and exerciſe, without philoſophy and intellect. And to the queſtion, how are theſe the happieſt?

(*q*) Plato Oper. p. 385. G. edit. Lugd.

(*r*) Ibid. p. 386. A.

(*s*) Ibid. p. 386. B, C, D.

pieſt? Socrates anſwers, that " they go into the bodies of ani-
" mals of a mild and ſocial kind, and who have ſome ſort of
" polity among them, ſuch as bees, ants, &c. or into human bo-
" dies, of a like kind with their own, and ſo become men of mo-
" deration and ſobriety. But that no man is allowed to be ad-
" mitted to the fellowſhip of the gods, but he that being a
" lover of knowledge, hath applied himſelf to philoſophy, and
" departed hence altogether pure (*t*)." He afterwards in the con-
cluſion of that diſcourſe, ſays, that " they who live holy and
" excellent lives, being freed from theſe earthly places as from
" priſons, aſcend to a pure region above the earth, where they
" dwell: and thoſe of them who were ſufficiently purged by phi-
" loſophy live all their time without bodies, and aſcend to ſtill
" more beautiful habitations (*u*)."

It appears then from this account of Socrates's ſentiments that he had very high ideas of the happineſs which, he ſuppoſed, would be provided after death for ſome ſouls, eſpecially the ſouls of thoſe who had applied themſelves to the ſtudy of wiſdom and philoſophy, who went immediately to the gods: yet with reſpect to the bulk of mankind, whether good or bad, he held the tranſmigration of ſouls, with this only difference, that bad and vicious men, after having hovered a while diſconſolate about the ſepulchres, paſs into the bodies of animals of like diſpoſitions with their own, wolves, kites, foxes, aſſes, &c. But the common

(*t*) Plato Oper. 386. E, F.

(*u*) Ibid. p. 400.

ſort of good men, who had exerciſed juſtice and temperance, go into the bodies of animals of a more gentle and civil kind, or returned into human bodies, ſuch as they had before. A mighty encouragement this to the practice of virtue, that they who applied themſelves to it were to have the privilege of animating the bodies of ants or bees, and at the utmoſt they were to return to the labours and offices of this mortal life: and on the other hand, the wicked had nothing elſe to fear, but the being thruſt into the bodies of animals ſuited to their own natures, and in which they might have it in their power to gratify their darling luſts and appetites under another form.

Cicero gives a ſummary account of Socrates's doctrine in the Phædo, in which he does not confine himſelf to his expreſſions, but repreſents the general ſenſe and deſign of them to this purpoſe: That when the ſouls of men depart out of their bodies they go two different ways: to thoſe who being wholly abandoned to their corrupt luſts and appetites, have contaminated themſelves with vices, whether of a public or private nature, a devious road is appointed, ſecluded from the council of the gods: but to them who have preſerved themſelves chaſte and uncorrupt, free from the contagion of their bodies, and who in human bodies have imitated the life of the gods, an eaſy way lies open for returning to thoſe from whom they came (*v*).

Socrates,

(*v*) " Ita enim cenſebat, itaque diſſeruit: duas eſſe vias, dupliceſque curſus " animorum è corpore excedentium. Nam qui ſe humanis vitiis contamina- " viſſent, et ſe totos libidinibus dediſſent, quibus excæcati, vel domeſticis vitiis " atque

Socrates, in the apology he makes to his judges, expreſſes his hope that it would be better for him that he was put to death: and he tells them, that this one thing ought to be conſidered as a certain truth, that no evil can befal a good man, whether living or dying, nor ſhall his affairs be ever neglected by the gods. Cicero renders it thus; " Id unum cogitare verum eſſe, nec cuiquam " bono mali quicquam evenire poſſe, nec vivo nec mortuo: nec " unquam ejus res à diis immortalibus negligentur (*x*)." And this general aſſertion ſeems to be the utmoſt that a man can attain to, by the mere light of reaſon and philoſophy, without the aſſiſtance of divine revelation.

What has been ſaid of Socrates may in a great meaſure be applied to Plato the moſt eminent of his diſciples: the dialogues in which he introduces Socrates diſcourſing concerning the immortality of the ſoul and a future ſtate, are generally and I think juſtly regarded, as containing not only Socrates's ſentiments but his own. The ſame doctrine in this reſpect runs through all Plato's works, under whatſoever claſs we range them, whether as eſoteric or exoteric. The antients as well as moderns have generally entertained this notion of them. Cicero ſays, that Plato

" atque flagitiis ſe inquinaviſſent, vel republicâ violandâ fraudes inexpiabiles con-
" cepiſſent, his devium quoddam iter eſſe, ſecluſum a concilio deorum; qui
" autem ſe integros caſtoſque ſervaviſſent, quibuſque eſſet minuma cum corpori-
" bus contagio, ſeſeque ab his ſemper ſevocaviſſent, eſſentque in corporibus hu-
" manis vitam imitati deorum, his ad illos a quibus eſſent profecti, reditum fa-
" cilem patere." Tuſcul. Diſput. lib. i. cap. 30.

(*x*) Ibid. cap. 41.

ſeems

ſeems to have deſigned to convince others of the immortality of the ſoul by the reaſons which he has offered: but that, however this might be, he ſeems certainly to have been perſuaded of it himſelf. "Tot rationes attulit, ut velle cæteris, ſibi certè per-"ſuaſiſſe videatur (*y*)." He often ſpeaks of a future ſtate of rewards and puniſhments in the groſs popular ſenſe, and talks of the judges in Hades, of Tartarus and Styx, Cocytus, Acheron and Pyriphlegethon. So he does in his Gorgias, in his tenth Republic, and even in his Phædo. This he did in a way of accommodation to the popular notions. He generally introduces them as μῦθοι, fables, i. e. fabulous repreſentations and traditions; and it appears from other paſſages in his works, that he did not himſelf believe them in the literal ſenſe: but it does not follow from this, that therefore he did not believe future rewards or puniſhments. There are ſome paſſages which ſeem to ſhew that he believed them in a more refined ſenſe. In his Theætetus having obſerved, that we ſhould uſe our utmoſt endeavours to be as like God as poſſible; and that this likeneſs to God conſiſts in being juſt and holy, together with prudence; and that nothing is more like God than he that is the juſteſt among men, he adds, "if we "ſhould ſay, that as to bad men, if they be not freed from their "depravity in this life, that place which is pure from evil will "not receive them when they die, and that they ſhall carry with "them the ſimilitude of their former life and manners; and being "evil themſelves ſhall be aſſociated to them that are evil: the "crafty and malicious when they hear theſe things will treat

(*y*) Tuſcul. Diſput. lib. i. cap. 21.

"them

" them as the ravings of mad men (z)." Plato's ſentiments here are noble, but he intimates that they met with little credit or regard. A learned author, who is not very favourable to that philoſopher, reckons the Theætetus from whence this paſſage is taken among his Eſoterics, which are ſuppoſed to contain his real opinions. The ſame doctrine is taught in his tenth Republic, which the ſame author ſuppoſes to be of the popular and exoteric kind. He there introduces Socrates as ſaying; " in the firſt place " you will grant me this, that it is not concealed from the gods, " what ſort of a man any one is, whether juſt or unjuſt; and if " this be not concealed from them, the one is beloved of God or " of the gods [for the word θεοφιλὴς there uſed may be tranſlated " either way, as he had ſpoken of the gods juſt before] the other " hated of God or of the gods, θεομισὴς. And ſhall we not ac- " knowledge that to him that is beloved of God, whatſoever " things are done by the gods are the beſt that can be, except " ſome neceſſary evil come upon him from a ſin he was formerly " guilty of? It muſt therefore be ſuppoſed concerning the juſt " man, that if he be in poverty or ſickneſs, or under any of " thoſe things which are accounted evils, theſe things ſhall in " the iſſue be for good, either when he is living or after he is " dead. For that man ſhall never be neglected by the gods, " who earneſtly deſires to become juſt; and applying himſelf to " the practices of virtue, endeavours to be made like to God as " far as is poſſible for a man to be:" he adds, that " the con- " trary of all this muſt be concluded concerning the unjuſt man."

(z) Plato Oper. p. 128. G. 129. A. edit. Lugd.

He

He afterwards obſerves, that bad men, when once they are found out to be ſo, for they may conceal their vices for a while, incur the contempt and hatred of their fellow-citizens, and are expoſed to many calamities in this life: and on the other hand, he takes notice of the " rewards and gifts which are conferred upon " the juſt man, whilſt he is yet alive, both by gods and men, " beſides thoſe good things which are contained in righteouſneſs " or virtue itſelf." He adds, that " theſe, viz. the puniſhments " of the wicked, and rewards of good men in this life which " he had mentioned, are nothing either in number or greatneſs " to thoſe which remain for each of them after death (*a*)." This is a remarkable paſſage, in which he aſſerts rewards for good men, and puniſhments for bad, both in this life and after death, diſtinct from what are contained in the nature of virtue and vice itſelf, and ſuppoſes the rewards and puniſhments of another life to be much greater than any in this. He then goes on to relate the famous ſtory of Erces Armenius, who having fallen in battle, and continued among the dead ſeveral days, on the twelfth day after, when they were going to bury him, revived, and gave an account of the things he had ſeen in the other world, the rewards beſtowed upon good men, and the puniſhments inflicted on the wicked. But it is to be obſerved that in the account Plato gives of this, he makes both the one and the other, except a few who were extremely wicked and incorrigible, to return again after

(*a*) Ταῦτα τοίνυν ἀξίν ἐστι πολλῴ ἀξὶ μείζω πρὸς ἐκεῖνα ἃ τελευτήσαντα ἑκάτερον περιμένει. Plat. Oper. p. 518. E. F.

a certain time into other bodies of men or beaſts, ſuch as were ſuitable to them, or which they themſelves ſhould chuſe (*b*).

To this may be added what he ſaith at the latter end of his tenth book of laws, where he obſerves, that the ſoul being appointed ſometimes to one body, ſometimes to another, runs through all kinds of tranſmutations: and the only thing that remains for him to do who orders theſe matters as it were by lot, is to remove thoſe of better manners to a better place, thoſe of worſe manners to a worſe, as is proper for every one, that each may receive that portion which is moſt ſuitable to him (*c*). He afterwards adds, that according to the different qualities of men's ſouls, and their actions, they have different abodes aſſigned them, and undergo divers changes according to the law and order of fate; that " thoſe who have been guilty of ſmaller ſins do not ſink ſo " deep, but wander about near the ſurface of the region; but " they that have ſinned more frequently and more heinouſly, " ſhall fall into the depth, and into thoſe lower places which are " called Hades, and by other names of the like kind, which, " both the living, and they that have departed out of their bo- " dies, are afraid and dream of (*d*)." And after ſome other " things to the ſame purpoſe, he adds, " this, O young man, " who thinkeſt the gods take no notice of thee, this is the judg- " ment of the gods who dwell in heaven; that he that is bad

(*b*) Plat. Oper. p. 521.

(*c*) Ibid. p. 672. A.

(*d*) Ibid. D.

" ſhould go to the ſouls which are bad, and he that is better to
" better ſouls both in this life and at death. Wherefore neither
" do thou, nor let any other, expect to be ſo lucky as to eſcape
" this judgment of the gods. For thou ſhalt never be neglected
" or paſs unnoticed, neither if thou ſhouldeſt be ſo ſmall as to
" hide thyſelf in the loweſt part of the earth, nor if thou ſhouldeſt
" take thy flight as high as heaven, but ſhalt ſuffer a ſuitable
" puniſhment, either whilſt thou remaineſt here, or when thou
" goeſt to Hades, or art tranſported to ſome wilder and more
" horrid place (*d*)."

I think from the paſſages which have been produced, to which others might be added, it ſufficiently appears that Plato, as well as his maſter Socrates, taught the immortality of the ſoul, and a ſtate of future rewards and puniſhments. But it is to be obſerved that neither of them pretended to have found this out merely by the force of their own reaſon, but frequently repreſent it as a matter of very antient tradition, which they endeavoured to ſupport and improve. They both of them ſeem to have believed in general that there would be a difference made in a future ſtate between good and bad men, and that the one ſhould be in a greater or leſs degree rewarded, and the other puniſhed. But they greatly weakened and obſcured that doctrine by mixing with it that of the tranſmigration of ſouls and other fictions, as well as

(*d*) Οὐ γὰρ ἀμελεχθήσεται ὑπ' αὐτῆς [Δίκης] ἀχ ἅτω σμικρὸς ὢν ὥστε κατὰ τὸ τῆς γῆς βάθος. κἂν ὑφ' ὑπὸ γενόμενος εἰς τὸν ἅιδην ἀναπλήσῃ, τίσεις δὲ αὐτῶν τὴν προσήκουσαν τιμωρίαν, εἴτ' ἐνθάδε μένων, εἴτε καὶ ἐν ἅδου διαπερήσεις εἴτε κἂν τέτων εἰς ἀγριώτερον ἔτι διακομισθεὶς τόπον. Plato Oper. 672. F.

by

by ſometimes talking very waveringly and uncertainly about it. And it is remarkable, that though there were ſeveral ſects of philoſophers, which profeſſed to derive their original from Socrates, ſcarce any of them taught the immortality of the ſoul as the doctrine of their ſchools, except Plato and his diſciples, and many even of theſe treated it as abſolutely uncertain.

That great man Cicero was a mighty admirer of Plato, and may be juſtly reckoned among the moſt eminent of thoſe philoſophers, who argued for the immortality of the ſoul. For though, according to the cuſtom of the new academy, of which ſect he was, he diſputed pro and con upon every ſubject, yet it appears from ſeveral paſſages in his works, that his judgment ſtrongly inclined him to that opinion (*e*), as at leaſt more probable than the contrary. He does not merely mention this in ſome ſingle detached paſſages, but he argues the matter at large, in one of the fineſt pieces antiquity has left us. He argues from the nature of the ſoul, and its uncompounded and indiviſible eſſence, of a quite different kind from theſe common elementary natures, from its wonderful powers and faculties, which have ſomething divine in them, and incompatible with ſluggiſh matter, from the ardent thirſt after immor-

(*e*) The learned Dr. Middleton, in his Life of Cicero, obſerves, that "he held "the immortality of the ſoul, and its ſeparate exiſtence after death, in a ſtate of "happineſs or miſery." But in the latter part of this aſſertion, that ingenious writer ſeems to be miſtaken: for Cicero did not hold that any ſeparate ſoul was in a ſtate of miſery after death. His whole argument in the firſt book of his Tuſculan Diſputations turns upon this point, that either the ſoul ſhall be extinguiſhed at death; or if it ſurvives, which is what he endeavours to prove, it ſhall be happy. Future miſery and torments he entirely rejects. But this ſhall be conſidered more particularly afterwards.

tality natural to the human mind, but which is moſt conſpicuous in the moſt exalted ſouls, and from ſome other topics, which the reader may ſee in the firſt book of his Tuſculan Diſputations. He ſpeaks to the ſame purpoſe in his Cato Major, and in his Somnium Scipionis, and on ſeveral other occaſions. It is true, there are two or three paſſages in his epiſtles to his friends, in which he ſeems to expreſs himſelf in a different ſtrain. In an epiſtle to Torquatus, he comforts himſelf with this thought: " Whilſt I ſhall " exiſt, I ſhall not be troubled at any thing, ſince I have no fault " to charge myſelf with; and if I ſhall not exiſt, I ſhall be de- " prived of all ſenſe,"—" Nec enim dum ero, angar ulla re; cùm " omni caream culpâ; et ſi non ero, ſenſu omni carebo (*f*)." In another epiſtle to the ſame Torquatus, he tells him, that " if " he was called to depart out of this life, he ſhould not be " ſnatched from that republic he would deſire to continue in, " eſpecially ſince he ſhould then be without any ſenſe."—" De- " inde quod mihi ad conſolandum commune tecum eſt, ſi jam " vocer ad exitum vitæ, non ab eâ republicâ avellar quâ caren- " dum eſſe doleam, præſertim cum id ſine ullo ſenſu ſit futu- " rum (*g*)." And in an epiſtle to L. Meſcinius, he ſays, death ought to be deſpiſed, or even wiſhed for, becauſe it will be void of all ſenſe. " Propterea quòd nullum ſenſum eſſet habi- " tura." And in an epiſtle to Toranius, he gives it as a reaſon for bearing with moderation whatſoever ſhould happen, that death is the end of all things. " Una ratio videtur, quicquid evenerit

(*f*) Cic. Epiſt. lib. vi. epiſt. 3.

(*g*) Ibid. epiſt. 4.

" ferre

" ferre moderatè, præſertim cum omnium rerum mors ſit extre-
" mum (*b*)." But I think it would be carrying it too far to conclude, from a few ſhort hints thrown out occaſionally in letters written in haſte, that Cicero's real opinion was that the ſoul died with the body, when he had ſo often given his reaſons for the contrary, in books where he profeſſedly treats on that ſubject. The perſons he writ to were probably Epicureans; ſuch was Torquatus; and the ſame may be ſuppoſed of the reſt, it being then the faſhionable opinion among the gentlemen of Rome. The letters were written in a political way, relating to the then melancholy ſtate of the republic, and it would have been abſurd, whatever Cicero's private opinion might have been, to have offered conſolations to Epicureans, drawn from the hope of a happy exiſtence after death. But though I think it cannot be abſolutely concluded from thoſe paſſages that Cicero was in his real ſentiments againſt the immortality of the ſoul, yet it is not probable that he would have expreſſed himſelf in the manner he has done in thoſe letters, if he had been uniform and ſteady in the belief of it. It may well be granted, that he had doubts in his mind concerning it, and therefore in the uncertainty he was under expreſſed himſelf differently at different times.

There is another philoſopher of great note, whom I ſhall here mention, though he lived after Chriſtianity had made ſome progreſs in the world, and therefore does not come ſo properly under our preſent conſideration; and that is Plutarch, who was ex-

(*b*) Cic. Epiſt. lib. vi. epiſt. 21.

tremely

tremely well verſed in the writings of the philoſophers who had flouriſhed before his time. He not only repreſents the doctrine of the immortality of the ſoul and a future ſtate as a matter of antient tradition, and which was countenanced by the laws, from which we ought not to recede (*i*), but he produces reaſons for it, eſpecially in his excellent treatiſe De Serâ Numinis vindictâ. He gives it as the ſum of his diſcourſe, that the Deity exerciſeth an inſpection over us, and diſtributeth to us according to our deſerts: and that from thence it follows, that ſouls are either altogether incorruptible and immortal, or that they remain for ſome time after death. He adds, that it would ſuppoſe God to be meanly and idly employed in concerning himſelf ſo much about us, if we had nothing divine within, or which reſembleth his own perfections, nothing that is ſtable and firm, but were only like leaves, which, as Homer ſpeaks, wither and fall in a ſhort time. And he repreſents it as abſurd to imagine that ſouls are made only to bloſſom and flouriſh for a day in a tender and delicate body of fleſh, and then to be immediately extinguiſhed on every ſlight occaſion (*k*). He argues farther, that if the ſouls of the deceaſed vaniſh like clouds or ſmoke, the oracle of Apollo would never have appointed propitiations to be made for the dead, and honours to be rendered to them. And he declares, that the ſame reaſons confirm the providence of God, and the permanency of the human ſoul; and that the one of theſe cannot be maintained, if the other be denied. Εἰς ἓν λόγον ὁ τοῦ θεοῦ τε πρόνοιαν ἅμα καὶ τὴν ἀθανασίαν τῆ

(*i*) Plut. Conſol. ad uxorem, Oper. tom. II. p. 612. edit. Xyl.

(*k*) Ibid. p. 560. B, C.

ἀναιρεῖται

ἀνθρωπίνης ψυχῆς βεβαιῶν, ᾗ δεύτερον ἔκ ἔστιν ἀπολιπεῖν ἀναιρεθεῖσα δεύτερον (*l*). He adds, "Now then, ſince the ſoul exiſteth after "death, it is probable that it partakes both of rewards and puniſh-"ments: for in this life the ſoul is in a ſtate of conflict, like a "wreſtler, but when it has finiſhed its conflict, it receives ſuitable "retributions." Yet in what follows, he intimates that theſe things were not commonly believed. And, indeed, he himſelf is far from being conſiſtent and uniform on this head: for though the paſſages now produced from him have a fair aſpect, there are other paſſages in his works which have a contrary appearance, as I ſhall have occaſion to ſhew.

(*l*) Plut. Conſol. ad uxorem, Oper. tom. II. p. 560. D, F. edit. Xyl.

CHAP.

CHAP. V.

Thoſe of the antient philoſophers who argued for the immortality of the ſoul, placed it on wrong foundations, and mixed things with it which weakened the belief of it. Some of them aſſerted, that the ſoul is immortal, as being a portion of the Divine Eſſence. They univerſally held the præ-exiſtence of the human ſoul, and laid the chief ſtreſs upon this for proving its immortality. Their doctrine of the tranſmigration of ſouls was a great corruption of the true doctrine of a future ſtate. Thoſe who ſaid the higheſt things of future happineſs, conſidered it as confined chiefly to perſons of eminence, or to thoſe of philoſophical minds, and afforded ſmall encouragement to the common kind of pious and virtuous perſons. The rewards of Elyſium were but temporary, and of a ſhort duration: and even the happineſs of thoſe privileged ſouls, who were ſuppoſed to be admitted not merely into Elyſium, but into heaven, was not everlaſting in the ſtrict and proper ſenſe. The Goſpel doctrine of eternal life to all good and righteous perſons was not taught by the antient Pagan philoſophers.

HAVING endeavoured to lay before the reader the ſentiments of thoſe Pagan philoſophers, who are generally looked upon as having been the ableſt aſſerters of the immortality of the ſoul and a future ſtate, I ſhall now make ſome obſervations, by which it may appear how far their inſtructions were to be

depended upon, and were of real ſervice to mankind, with regard to this important article.

And the firſt thing I would obſerve is, that the beſt of thoſe philoſophers placed it on wrong foundations, or mixed things with it, which tended greatly to weaken the belief or defeat the influence of it. This appears partly from what has been already obſerved. Some of them, as the Pythagoreans, argued for the ſoul's immortality, becauſe the divine nature from which it is taken, and of which it is a detached part or portion immerſed in a human body, is immortal. This certainly was putting it on a falſe foundation, and building it upon a notion abſurd in itſelf, and which, if purſued to its juſt conſequences, tends to the ſubverſion of all religion, by confounding God and the creature, and making them both of the ſame nature and eſſence. A celebrated author has argued, from the notion which the Pythagoreans and many other antient philoſophers had of the ſoul's being a part of God, that they did not and could not really believe a future ſtate of rewards and puniſhments. And, indeed, it ſeems to be a natural conſequence of that notion, that at leaſt there could be no future puniſhments. But men do not always ſee and acknowledge the conſequences of their own principles. And they might as reaſonably ſuppoſe this notion to be reconcilable to future rewards and puniſhments, as to preſent ones. For ſince they ſuppoſed, that the ſoul, though it be a part of God, is capable in this life of being both rewarded and puniſhed; and that whilſt it is here in this body, it is ſubject to vice, ignorance, and a variety

of evils (*m*); I ſee no reaſon why it might not be ſuppoſed to be alſo obnoxious to puniſhments in a future ſtate: for the abſurdity is equal in the one caſe as in the other.

The notion of the ſoul's being a portion of the Divine Eſſence was common to other philoſophers, as well as the Pythagoreans. It has been already ſhewn, that this was the opinion of the Stoics, though they ſeem not to have argued the ſoul's immortality from it. What were Plato's ſentiments on this head the learned are not agreed. Plutarch, in his Platonic queſtions, gives it as Plato's opinion, That "the ſoul, being partaker of underſtanding, reaſon, "and harmony, is not the work of God only, but alſo a part of "him; and is not made by him, but from him, and out of him." Οὐκ ἔργον ἐστὶ τοῦ Θεοῦ μόνον, ἀλλὰ καὶ μέρος, ἐξ' ὑπ' αὐτοῦ, ἀλλ' ἀπ' αὐτοῦ, καὶ ἐξ αὐτοῦ γέγονεν (*n*). But the ſame author ſeems elſewhere to repreſent Plato's opinion otherwiſe. Speaking of the rational ſoul,

(*m*) The abſurdity of this is well expoſed by Velleius the Epicurean, in Cicero's firſt book De Nat. Deor. cap. xi. p. 28. edit. Davis.

(*n*) Plutarch. Opera, tom. II. p. 1001. edit. Xyl. Francof. 1620. A very able and learned writer, who is a zealous advocate for the antient philoſophers, obſerves, "That the Egyptians imagined the ſoul to be a part or portion of God "himſelf, a ſection of God's ſubſtance, which always did and always muſt exiſt. "And that this was the philoſophic notion from the time of Pythagoras among the "Greeks;" and that "he made the ſoul to be a part of the τὸ ἓν." See Dr. Sykes's Principles and Connection of Natural and Revealed Religion, chap. xiv. p. 392. 394. By repreſenting it as the philoſophic notion from the time of Pythagoras among the Greeks, he ſeems to ſuppoſe that it was the doctrine of Plato himſelf. And if this be a true repreſentation, it is a remarkable inſtance to ſhew how much philoſophers of the greateſt abilities were miſtaken in points of high conſequence. Nor can I ſee how this ingenious author could juſtly affirm, as he has done, that in what relates to the Deity, "Thoſe who followed the mere light of nature (by "whom

ſoul, he gives it as the opinion of Pythagoras and Plato, that " it " is immortal, and that it is not God, but the work of the eternal " God." Καὶ γὰρ τὴν ψυχὴν οὐ θεὸν ἀλλ' ἔργον τοῦ ἀϊδίου θεοῦ ὑπάρχειν. And it is obſervable that he had declared a few lines before, that Pythagoras and Plato held that the human ſoul is immortal; becauſe " when it departs out of the body, it recedes to the ſoul of " the univerſe, to that which is of the ſame kind or nature with " it." Πρὸς τὸ ὁμογενὲς. It is not eaſy to reconcile theſe things. But it is proper to obſerve, that the ſoul of the world was not the abſolutely Supreme God in the Platonic, though it was ſo in the Stoic ſyſtem (*o*). Plotinus repreſents the human ſoul, as ὁμοειδὴς, of the ſame ſpecies with the mundane ſoul, which is his third hypoſtaſis, and which he calls the eldeſt ſiſter of our human ſouls (*p*).

" whom he particularly underſtands the philoſophers) ſeem to be very clear, and " made uſe of the faculties God had given them to great and good purpoſes:" and that " they cloſely purſued truth in what they diſcerned about the Governor of the " univerſe." Ibid. p. 362. 370.

(*o*) Plato repreſents the Supreme God, the τὸ ἀγαθὸν, as of a moſt ſingular and tranſcendent nature, not to be named or comprehended. There is a remarkable paſſage at the latter end of his ſixth republic, the purport of which is this, That " as the ſun not only gives the power of being ſeen to the things which are ſeen, " but is alſo the cauſe of their generation, growth, and nutrition, but is not the " generation itſelf; in like manner, God with reſpect to the things that are known, " is not only the cauſe of their being known, but alſo of their eſſence and exiſtence, " yet is not that eſſence, but is above eſſence in dignity and power *." Here he ſeems plainly to diſtinguiſh the Supreme God from the world and all things in it. He ſuppoſes him to be the author and cauſe of knowledge, wiſdom, truth, and good, of the eſſence and exiſtence of every thing, but that his eſſence is entirely diſtinct from that of every thing.

(*p*) Plotin. Ennead. lib. i. cap. 2.

* Platon. Opera, p. 479. C. edit. Lugd.

And yet he does not ſeem to have ſuppoſed the human ſoul to be in the ſtricteſt ſenſe a part of that God whom he looked upon to be abſolutely ſupreme. But Dr. Cudworth is very right in the cenſure he has paſſed upon it, that " as this favours highly of " philoſophic pride and arrogance, to think ſo magnificently of " themſelves, and to equalize in a manner their own ſouls with " that mundane ſoul, ſo was it a monſtrous degradation of the " third hypoſtaſis of their trinity:" and which according to that learned writer, they ſuppoſed to be of the ſame nature, tho' inferior to the firſt. He adds, that " they did doubtleſs therein " deſignedly lay a foundation for their polytheiſm and creature-" worſhip, for their coſmolatry, aſtrolatry, and dæmonolatry (*q*)."

But not to inſiſt longer upon this, certain it is, that thoſe philoſophers who argued for the immortality of the ſoul univerſally held its pre-exiſtence before it animated the human body, and laid the ſtreſs of the argument for its eternal exiſtence after its departure from the body, upon its exiſtence from times imemorial, or even from everlaſting before its entrance into it. This is what the very learned writer laſt mentioned affirms concerning all the antient aſſerters of the ſoul's immortality. That " they held that " it was not generated or made out of nothing, for then it might " return to nothing. And therefore they commonly began " with proving its præ-exiſtence, proceeding thence to prove its " permanency after death (*r*)." This is the method uſed by So-

(*q*) Cudworth's Intel. Syſt. p. 593.

(*r*) Ibid. p. 38, 39. 2d. edit.

crates

crates in Plato's Phædo. He firſt endeavours to prove, that the ſoul exiſted before its entrance into the body, and that the knowledge we now have is only a reminiſcence of that which we had in the præ-exiſtent ſtate, and then proceeds to prove that it ſhall exiſt after its being ſeparated from it (*s*)." Thus they argued for the ſoul's immortality upon a principle which it was impoſſible for them to prove, and which really weakened the doctrine they intended to eſtabliſh. Hence it was, that they who thought there was no reaſon to believe that the ſoul had an exiſtence before it animated the human body, would not allow it ſurvived the body: for it was, as Cicero repreſents it, " a principle univerſally ac- " knowledged, that whatever is born and hath a beginning, muſt " alſo have an end." And upon this foundation it was, that the famous Stoic Panætius, who was otherwiſe a great admirer of Plato, denied the ſoul's immortality. " Volt enim," ſays Cicero, ſpeaking of Panætius, " quod nemo negat, quicquid natum ſit " interire: naſci autem animos, quod declarat eorum ſimilitudo, " qui procreantur, quæ etiam in ingeniis, non ſolùm in corpori- " bus, appareat (*t*)." Cicero himſelf, in arguing for the immortality of the ſoul, aſſerts its præ-exiſtence from eternity. There is a remarkable paſſage to this purpoſe in his book de Conſolatione, quoted by himſelf in the firſt book of his Tuſculan Diſputations. He there ſays, that " the ſoul has not its original from the earth; " for that it has nothing in it mixed or compounded, or which " ſeems to be ſprung or formed out of the earth, nothing watry,

(*s*) Plato Oper. p. 384, 385. edit. Lugd.

(*t*) Tuſcul. Diſput. lib. i. cap. 32. edit. Davis.

" or

" or airy, or fiery in its conſtitution: for in theſe natures there is " nothing which hath the notion of memory and underſtanding, " which can both retain the things which are paſt, and look for- " ward to things future, and comprehend the preſent: which " alone are divine: nor can it ever be found from whence theſe " things ſhould come to man but from God" I think this is very juſtly argued: but afterwards he carries it farther: " Whatſoever " thing is in us, ſays he, which perceives, which underſtands, " which lives, which has a force and vigour of its own, it is ce- " leſtial and divine; and for that reaſon muſt of neceſſity be eter- " nal." " Ita quicquid eſt iſtud quod ſentit, quod ſapit, quod " vivit, quod viget, cœleſte ac divinum eſt, ob eamque rem " æternum ſit neceſſe eſt (*u*)." This looks as if Cicero thought that the human ſoul was really and properly a part of the divine eſſence. But I think this does not neceſſarily follow. It may perhaps ſignify no more, than that he calls the ſoul divine, to ſignify its near cognation to the Divine Nature, and the reſemblance it bears to it, and in oppoſition to things which are of an earthly and elementary nature. In the words immediately preceding theſe laſt mentioned, he expreſſes himſelf thus; " Singularis eſt igitur " quædam natura atque vis animi, ſejuncta ab his uſitatis notiſque " naturis." Where he intimates that the ſoul is of a ſingualar nature and force, different from thoſe known and common natures, that is, from earthly and corporeal things, of which he had been ſpeaking before: and in contradiſtinction to which he calls it divine. And he introduces this whole paſſage, with obſerving,

(*u*) Tuſcul. Diſput. lib. i. cap. 27. p. 67. edit. Davis.

that

that beſides the four elements of the material world, there is a fifth nature, which was firſt taught by Ariſtotle, which belongs to the gods and human ſouls; and intimates that this was the opinion which he himſelf followed in the quotation produced from his book de Conſolatione. " Sin autem eſt quinta quædam " natura ab Ariſtotele inducta primùm, hæc et deorum eſt et ani- " morum. Hanc nos ſententiam ſecuti his ipſis verbis in Con- " ſolatione hæc expreſſimus." If Cicero had thought that Ariſtotle intended by the fifth nature the divine eſſence properly ſo called, it could not have been ſaid, that he was the firſt that introduced it, for Pythagoras had taught it before: it is therefore probably to be underſtood of a nature diſtinct both from theſe lower elementary natures, and from the eſſence of the Supreme Being, though near a-kin to it and perfectly like it; of which both the gods, i. e. the inferior deities, and human ſouls were partakers. And this alſo ſeems to be plainly intimated in the words with which he concludes that fragment. " Nec verò Deus " ipſe, qui intelligitur à nobis alio modo intelligi poteſt, niſi " mens ſoluta quædam et libera, ſegregata ab omni concretione " mortali omnia ſentiens et movens, ipſaque prædita motu " ſempiterna." Where immediately after having ſaid, that the ſoul is a celeſtial and divine thing, and muſt for that reaſon be eternal; he adds, that " God himſelf, as far as he is apprehended " by us, can be conceived of no otherwiſe, than as a mind diſ- " engaged from all mortal concretion or mixture, perceiving and " moving all things, and itſelf endued with an eternal motion." Here he ſeems plainly to diſtinguiſh God himſelf, " Deus ipſe," in the higheſt ſenſe, from human ſouls, which yet he ſuppoſes to

be of a ſimilar and congenial nature; and a little before he repreſents vital activity, underſtanding, invention, and memory, as divine things or qualities, on the account of which the ſoul might be called divine, as he chuſes to expreſs it, or, as Euripides ventures to call it, a God; where he ſeems to look upon the calling the ſoul a God to be a daring manner of expreſſion even in a poet. "Quæ autem divina? vigere, ſapere, invenire, meminiſſe. Ergo "quidem animus, qui (ut ego dico divinus) eſt ut Euripides audet dicere Deus (*x*)." And elſewhere having repreſented the ſoul as much ſuperior to the brute animals, and decerped from the divine mind, he ſaith, "it can be compared with no other but "with God himſelf, if it be lawful to ſay ſo." "Humanus "autem animus, decerptus ex mente divinâ, cum alio nullo niſi "cum ipſo Deo (in hoc fas eſt dicta) comparari poteſt (*y*)."

But if we ſhould allow that it was not Cicero's opinion that the human ſoul is in the ſtricteſt and propereſt ſenſe a part of God, yet he certainly ſuppoſed that its nature is of the ſame kind, and is

(*x*) He there adds, that if God be either air or fire, "anima aut ignis," the ſoul of man is the ſame: for as that celeſtial nature is free from earth and moiſture, ſo the ſoul of man is free from both theſe: and that if there be a fifth nature, it is common both to gods and men. Tuſcul. Diſput. lib. i. cap. 26. p. 65, 66. edit Davis.

(*y*) Tuſcul. Diſput. lib. v. cap. 13. p. 371. edit. Davis. Plato expreſſes himſelf after the ſame manner. In his tenth Republic, he talks of a man's endeavouring, by applying himſelf to the practice of virtue, "to be made like to God, as "far as it is poſſible for man to be *." And in his Philebus, he talks of taking "our manners from God, as far as it is poſſible for man to partake of God. Καθ' ὅσον δυνατὸν θεᾷ ἀνθρώπῳ μετασχεῖν.

* Plato Oper. p. 518. C. edit. Lugd. See alſo his Theætetus, ibid. p. 128. F.

like

like his naturally and neceſſarily eternal. Thus he aſſerts in the paſſage above cited. " Cœleſte ac divinum eſt, ob eamque rem " æternum ſit neceſſe eſt." And in the ſame diſcourſe he produces a paſſage from Plato's Phædrus, which he ſeems highly to approve; and which he had alſo cited in his ſixth book de Republica. Plato begins with obſerving, that every ſoul is immortal, πᾶσα ψυχὴ ἀθάνατος. And the argument he uſes to prove it is elegantly tranſlated by Cicero. It is to this purpoſe: that " that which always moves is eternal: that which is moved by " another muſt come to an end of motion, and conſequently of " life: but that which moves itſelf will never ceaſe to move, be- " cauſe it is never deſerted by itſelf. Moreover it is the foun- " tain and principle of motion to all other things which are " moved. And that which is the principal can have no original " or beginning: for from it all things ariſe, but it cannot ariſe " from any other. And if it never had a beginning, it ſhall never " have an end. Since therefore it is manifeſt that that is eternal " which has the principle of motion within itſelf, who will deny " that this nature belongs to ſouls (z)?" He concludes with ſaying, that " this is the proper nature and force of the ſoul. And " ſince it is the only thing which always moves itſelf, it never " had a beginning, but is eternal." " Nam hæc eſt propria na- " tura animi atque vis: quæ ſi eſt una ex omnibus quæ ſe ipſa

(z) Plutarch. de Placit. Philoſ. lib. iv. cap. 2. ſays, that Thales was the firſt who taught that the ſoul is in a perpetual motion, and that this motion proceeds from itſelf. Φύσιν ἀεικίνητον καὶ αὐτοκίνητον. This is an argument often made uſe of by thoſe of the antients who pleaded for the immortality of the ſoul. See Dr. Davis's note on Tuſcul. Diſput. lib. i. cap. 23. p. 53.

" ſemper moveat, neque certè nata eſt, et æterna eſt." Plato has it thus, ἐξ ἀναγκῆς ἀγένητόν τε καὶ ἀθάνατόν ψυχὴ ἂν εἴη, of neceſ- " ſity the ſoul muſt be an ungenerated and immortal thing (*a*)."

Cicero highly commends this as both elegantly and acutely argued, and afterwards ſums it up himſelf thus: " The ſoul per- " ceives that it moves, and at the ſame time perceives that it " moves not by a foreign force, but by its own; and it can ne- " ver happen that it ſhould be deſerted by itſelf: from whence it " follows, that it muſt be eternal." " Sentit igitur animus ſe " moveri, quod cum ſentit illud una ſentit, ſe vi ſuâ non alienâ " moveri, nec accidere poſſe ut ipſa unquam à ſe deſeratur: ex " quo efficitur æternitas (*b*)." This way of arguing ſo much admired by Cicero might be made uſe of to prove the eternal exiſtence of the one ſelf-exiſtent independent Being, the firſt cauſe of all things, and the principle and original of all motion. But when applied to the human ſoul, if it proved any thing, would prove that it is ſelf-originate, independent, and neceſſarily eternal by the force of its own nature. So that if it be not ſtrictly of the ſame eſſence with the ſupreme God, it is of a nature perfectly like his, underived, and which exiſted of itſelf from everlaſting, and continueth always to exiſt by its own force, and can never be deſtroyed or ceaſe to exiſt (*c*). Hence it was that ſome of the antient

(*a*) Plato in Phædro, Opera, p. 344. D. E. edit. Lugd. 1590.

(*b*) Cic. Tuſcul. Diſput. l. i. cap. 23. p. 52. et ſeq. edit. Davis.

(*c*) This ſeems to be the courſe of Plato's argument for the immortality of the ſoul as urged by Plato in his Phædrus, and after him by Cicero. And yet the ſame

antient fathers found fault with the doctrine of the natural immortality of the ſoul as taught by the Heathen philoſophers; becauſe they thought it tended to prove that the ſoul continued to exiſt by a neceſſity of nature, and was independent on God. Arnobius particularly charges them with holding, that the ſoul was equally immortal with God himſelf; which, he thought, had a tendency to take away the dread of a ſupreme power, and of a future judgment and puniſhment; and thereby to encourage men to all manner of wickedneſs, and the licentious indulgence of their luſts and appetites. " Quid enim," ſays he, " prohibebit quo " minus hæc faciat? metus ſupremæ poteſtatis, judiciumque di- " vinum? Et qui poterit territari formidinis alicujus horrore, cui " fuerat perſuaſum, tam ſe eſſe immortalem, quam ipſum Deum " primum? nec ab eo judicari quicquam de ſe poſſe: cum ſit " una immortalitas in utroque, nec in alterius altera conditionis " poſſit æqualitate vexari."

It has been ſhewn that the principal arguments made uſe of by the antient Pagan philoſophers to prove the immortality of the ſoul placed it on wrong foundations. I ſhall not enter on a particular conſideration of the other arguments offered by them in proof of that important article. One would have expected to have met with ſome ſolid and ſatisfactory reaſonings on this ſubject in Plato's Phædo, a treatiſe highly celebrated by antiquity,

ſame Plato in his Timæus makes the immortality of the ſecondary gods to depend not merely upon their own nature, but upon the will of the ſupreme God. And ſurely this equally holds concerning human ſouls.

and the profeſſed deſign of which is to prove the immortality. And it may reaſonably be ſuppoſed, that Plato has there laid together, and put into the mouth of Socrates, whatever he judged to be of the greateſt force, whether it had been advanced by Socrates, or was of his own invention. But I am ſorry to obſerve, that, abſtracting from the fine manner of carrying on that dialogue, there is not much ſtrength of argument even in thoſe things on which he ſeems to lay the greateſt ſtreſs: and that ſome of them are obſcure and trifling, and what one would not have expected from ſo great a man (*d*). Socrates and Plato ſeem to be among the firſt that undertook to prove this point in a way of reaſon and argument. But, as was before obſerved, they both repreſent it as having been tranſmitted by antient traditions, to which it was juſt to give credit as being of a divine original.

(*d*) The reader that would ſee a ſummary of Socrates's arguments for the immortality of the ſoul, as repreſented in Plato's Phædo, may conſult the account given of them by Dr. Campbell in his Neceſſity of Revelation, ſect. 3. p. 100. et ſeq. upon all which that learned writer obſerves, that "Socrates by no means "arrived at this truth, in purſuing any ſeries of ideas or notions that could ariſe "in one's mind from the nature and relations of things. He is much like a man "who has ſome way or other picked up a truth, but can give no account of it, "but caſts abroad to find out ſomething to juſtify his opinion in the beſt man-"ner he can, without advancing any thing to the purpoſe." Ibid. p. 107. Indeed ſome of the latter Platoniſts and Pythagoreans who lived after life and immortality was brought into the moſt clear and open light by the Goſpel, ſeem to have managed the argument with much greater advantage than Plato himſelf. This may be particularly obſerved concerning Plotinus; and indeed this great article ſeems then to have been more generally acknowledged among the philoſophers, than it was before. And yet Porphyry, one of the moſt learned of them, and a great admirer of Plotinus obſerves, that the reaſons whereby the philoſophers endeavoured to demonſtrate the immortality of the ſoul were eaſy to be overthrown. Ap. Euſeb. Præpar. Evangel. lib. xiv. cap. 10. p. 741. C.

Another

Another remarkable inſtance, in which thoſe of the ancients who profeſſed to believe the immortality of the ſoul, and a ſtate of future rewards and puniſhments, greatly weakened and corrupted that doctrine, relates to the notion they univerſally held of the tranſmigration of ſouls. This has been already mentioned; but it is proper to take ſome further notice of it in this place.

As they maintained the præ-exiſtence of human ſouls before their entrance into their preſent bodies, ſo alſo that they tranſmigrated after their departure out of theſe bodies, from one body to another. Theſe notions were looked upon as having a near connexion; and thoſe that held the former maintained the latter too. And indeed they who believed that their ſouls had exiſted long before they animated their preſent bodies, would find no difficulty in conceiving that after quitting theſe bodies they paſſed into others. And what might contribute to the general reception and propagation of this notion, both among the more learned and the vulgar, was, that they believed, upon the credit of a very antient tradition, that the ſoul did not die with the body, and that it ſurvived in a future ſtate, and yet could not well conceive how it could live and ſubſiſt without animating ſome body: this led them to ſuppoſe that, when it was diſlodged from one body, it animated another. And as they believed that the inferior animals had ſouls as well as men, they might ſuppoſe that human ſouls might tranſmigrate into the bodies of thoſe animals (*e*).

(*e*) Some ſuppoſe that the doctrine of tranſmigration might have been owing to an abuſe or perverſion of an antient tradition concerning the reſurrection of the body: concerning which ſee below, chap. viii.

But

But whenceſoever this notion of the tranſmigration of ſouls had its riſe, it ſpread very generally among the nations, and was embraced not only by the vulgar, but by the moſt wiſe and learned. And it proved to be a great corruption and depravation of the true original doctrine of the immortality of the ſoul, and a future ſtate. They endeavoured indeed to explain it ſo as to accommodate it to moral purpoſes, by ſuppoſing different kinds of bodies which they were appointed to animate, in order to preſerve ſome appearance of future rewards and puniſhments. But in reality upon this ſcheme there could be no proper retributions in another life for what was done in the preſent. For in the ſeveral tranſmigrations from one body to another, the ſoul was generally ſuppoſed to have no remembrance in a ſucceeding body of the actions it had done, and the events which had happened to it in a former. Pythagoras indeed pretended to remember the ſeveral tranſmigrations he had paſſed through, and what he had done, and what had befallen him in the ſeveral bodies he had animated: but this was repreſented as a peculiar and extraordinary privilege, granted to him by Mercury, and which was not ſuppoſed to be the common caſe of tranſmigrated ſouls. And if the ſoul in its ſeveral removes forgets what was done in the former body, it cannot, when entered into another body, be properly ſaid to be rewarded or puniſhed for what it had done before, and of which it had no conſciouſneſs.

It is plain therefore that the doctrine of the tranſmigration of ſouls, on ſuppoſition that this tranſmigration was to begin immediately upon the ſoul's departure from the preſent body, which

ſeems to be the notion that many entertained of it, and probably Pythagoras himſelf, left no proper place for a ſtate of future retributions.

Others therefore ſuppoſed that ſouls were firſt to go to Hades or the Inferi, where they were ſuppoſed to have a remembrance of their paſt actions, and to be rewarded or puniſhed accordingly. And when they had abode there for ſome time they were to enter into bodies of various kinds, and after a ſucceſſion of tranſmigrations were to be refunded into the univerſal ſoul, and to loſe their individual ſubſiſtence.

The tranſmigrations which have been mentioned were ſuppoſed to belong to all human ſouls in general. But there were exceptions made in favour of ſome privileged perſons.

This leads me to another obſervation upon the doctrine of thoſe philoſophers who profeſſed to believe a future ſtate; and that is, that when they ſpeak in the higheſt ſtrains of future happineſs, it relates chiefly to ſome privileged ſouls of diſtinguiſhed eminence, but affords no great comfort or encouragement to the common ſort of pious and virtuous perſons. With regard to theſe laſt, Socrates and Plato ſuppoſe them to go to Elyſium and the Iſlands of the bleſſed, but after a temporary abode there (*f*), they were to

(*f*) The learned Biſhop of Glouceſter has obſerved, that "the antients diſtinguiſhed the ſouls of men into three ſpecies, the human, the heroic, and the dæmonic. The two laſt were indeed believed to enjoy eternal hapineſs for their public

to paſs through ſeveral tranſmigrations, and were at length to return to life again in ſuch bodies of men or beaſts as were beſt ſuited to them, or as they themſelves ſhould chuſe (*g*). But both theſe philoſophers give a high idea of the happineſs which ſome perſons ſhall be raiſed to after their departure hence, that they ſhall be admitted to the fellowſhip of the gods in celeſtial abodes; but theſe were only ſuch as having applied themſelves to the ſtudy of philoſophy, had lived abſtracted from the body and all corporeal things, and had arrived to an eminent degree of wiſdom and purity: or ſuch great and heroic ſouls as had been eminently uſeful to the public. Plato in his fifth Republic ſays, that they who died in war, after having behaved with courage and bravery, become holy and terreſtrial dæmons, averters of evils, and guardians of mankind, and that their ſepulchres ſhould be honoured, and they themſelves ſhould be worſhipped as dæmons (*b*). But it cannot be denied, that a perſon might behave with great courage and bravery, and die in the war in the cauſe of his country, and yet in other reſpects be far from deſerving the character of a good and virtuous man. And in that very book he allows ſuch a man, as a reward of his bravery, liberties in indulging his amorous in-

" public ſervices on earth, not indeed in Elyſium, but in heaven: where they " became a kind of demigods. But all of the firſt which included the great body " of mankind, were underſtood to have their deſignation in purgatory, Tartarus, " or Elyſium. The firſt and laſt of which abodes were temporary, and the ſecond " only eternal." Div. Leg. vol. I. p. 396. 2d. edit.

(*g*) See here above, p. 346, 347. and compare what Plato ſays in his Gorgias, Oper. p. 312. F. with what is ſaid in the Phædo, ibid. p. 386. E, F. and in his tenth Republic, ibid. p. 521. edit. Lugd.

(*b*) Plato Oper. p. 464, 465. edit. Lugd.

clinations,

clinations, in no wiſe conſiſtent with the rules of purity and virtue. But in this, as well as other inſtances, Plato and the other philoſophers took care to adapt their notions of a future ſtate and its rewards to political ends and views, and had not ſo much a regard to what they themſelves thought to be the truth, as to what they judged to be for the public utility, and the intereſt of the ſtate. Cicero places thoſe who had been ſerviceable to their country, in preſerving and aſſiſting it, and enlarging its dominion, not merely in Elyſium, which was only a temporal felicity, but in heaven, where they were to be happy for ever. " Omnibus " qui patriam conſervârint, juverint, auxerint, certum eſſe in cœlo " ac definitum locum, ubi beati ævo ſempiterno fruentur (*i*). The Stoics held that common ſouls at death, or ſoon after it, were to be reſolved into the univerſal nature, but that great and eminent ones were to continue to the conflagration, and that ſome of them ſhould be advanced to the dignity of gods. The Egyptians, notwithſtanding their notions of the tranſmigration of ſouls, ſuppoſed that ſome ſouls might be taken immediately into the fellowſhip of the gods; as appears from the remarkable prayer addreſſed to the ſun, and all the gods the givers of life, on the behalf of the perſon deceaſed; of which ſome notice was taken above (*k*). But this ſeems to have been confined to nobles and perſons of eminence, and was not ſuppoſed to extend to the vulgar. In like manner the Indian Gymnoſophiſts, who were zealous abettors of the doctrine of tranſmigration, ſeem to have made exceptions to

(*i*) Cic. in Somnio Scipionis, cap. 3.

(*k*) Page 43. of this volume.

the general law in their own favour, as having attained to an exalted degree of ſanctity, and that by burning themſelves in the fire they ſhould go out of the body perfectly pure, and have an immediate acceſs to the gods. It is alſo ſuppoſed in the Golden Verſes of Pythagoras, that they who came up to the height of the Pythagorean precepts, and lived an abſtracted and philoſophical life, ſhould at their death be made heroes or dæmons, and taken into the fellowſhip of the gods (*l*). To this notion of many of the philoſophers concerning the happineſs reſerved in a future ſtate for ſome great and eminent ſouls, Tacitus ſeems to refer in his Life of Agricola, when he ſaith, " Si, ut ſapientibus placet, non cum " corpore extinguuntur animæ magnæ, &c." where he ſeems to make it the ſpecial privilege of great ſouls, not to be extinguiſhed with the body: and even of this he ſpeaks doubtfully.

It appears then that the Goſpel doctrine of eternal life and happineſs, promiſed and prepared for all good men without exception, whether in a high or low condition, learned or unlearned, who live ſoberly, righteouſly, and godly in this preſent world, and go on in a patient continuance in well-doing, was not taught by the moſt eminent of thoſe philoſophers, who profeſſed to believe the immortality of the ſoul and a future ſtate. The happineſs propoſed to be enjoyed even in their Elyſium was to be comparatively but of a ſhort duration: Virgil fixes it to a thouſand years. And though they talked of ſome eminent and privileged ſouls of great men and philoſophers, who were ſuppoſed to be

(*l*) Page 340. of this volume.

raiſed

raiſed to heaven, and there to enjoy eternal happineſs, or even to become demi-gods or dæmons, yet they could not, in conſiſtency with their ſchemes, underſtand this of a happineſs which was in the ſtrict and proper ſenſe eternal, and never to have an end. For, as hath been already ſhewn, it was a notion which generally obtained among them, that at certain periods which the Stoics termed conflagrations, and which were to happen at the end of what they, as well as the Pythagoreans and Platoniſts, called the great year, there ſhould be an utter end put to the preſent ſtate of things; and the ſouls of all men, and even thoſe of them which had become gods, dæmons, or heroes, were to be reſumed into the univerſal ſoul, and thereby loſe their individual exiſtence: after which there was to be an univerſal renovation or reproduction of all things; and a new courſe was to begin in every reſpect like the old; and that ſuch periodical deſtructions and renovations ſhould ſucceed one another in infinitum.

The obſervations which have been made are ſufficient to ſhew that thoſe antient philoſophers, who are generally looked upon as the ableſt aſſerters of the immortality of the ſoul and a future ſtate, had wrong and confuſed notions concerning it; and that thoſe Chriſtian writers are much miſtaken who repreſent the antient Pagan philoſophers as having taught the ſame doctrine concerning a future ſtate, which, to our unſpeakable comfort and advantage, is brought into a clear and open light by the Goſpel.

CHAP. VI.

Thoſe that ſeemed to be the moſt ſtrenuous advocates for the immortality of the ſoul and a future ſtate among the antients, did not pretend to any certainty concerning it. The uncertainty they were under appears from their way of managing their conſolatory diſcourſes on the death of their friends. To this alſo it was owing, that in their exhortations to virtue they laid little ſtreſs on the rewards of a future ſtate. Their not having a certainty concerning a future ſtate, put them upon ſchemes to ſupply the want of it. Hence they inſiſted upon the ſelf-ſufficiency of virtue for complete happineſs without a future recompence: and aſſerted, that a ſhort happineſs is as good as an eternal one.

ANOTHER important obſervation with regard to thoſe antient philoſophers, who were eſteemed the ableſt advocates for the immortality of the ſoul and a future ſtate, is, that after all the pains they took to prove it, they did not pretend to an abſolute certainty, nor indeed do they ſeem to have fully ſatisfied themſelves about it. The paſſages to this purpoſe are well known, and have been often quoted, but cannot be entirely omitted here.

Socrates himſelf, when he was near death, in diſcourſing with his friends concerning the immortality of the ſoul, expreſſes his hope that he ſhould go to good men after death, " but this (ſays

(ſays he) " I would not abſolutely affirm." He indeed is more poſitive as to what relates to his going to the gods after death, though this he alſo qualifies, by ſaying, that " if he could affirm " any thing concerning matters of ſuch a nature, he would affirm " this.—Εἰπὲρ τἀλλο τῶν τοιέτων δηχυρισαίμην ἂν ἐγ τῦτο (*m*)." And he concludes that long diſcourſe concerning the ſtate of ſouls after death with ſaying, " That theſe things are ſo as I have re- " preſented them it does not become any man of underſtanding to " affirm:" though he adds, " that if it appears that the ſoul is " immortal, it ſeems reaſonable to think, that either ſuch things " or ſomething like them are true, with regard to our ſouls and " their habitations after death: and that it is worth making a trial, " for the trial is noble (*n*)."

And in his apology to his judges, he comforts himſelf with this conſideration, that " there is much ground to hope that death is " good: for it muſt neceſſarily be one of theſe two; either the " dead man is nothing, and hath not a ſenſe of any thing; or it " is only a change or migration of the ſoul hence to another " place, according to what we are told, κ τὰ λεγόμενα. If " there is no ſenſe left, and death is like a profound ſleep, and " quiet reſt without dreams, it is wonderful to think what gain " it is to die; but if the things which are told us are true, that " death is a migration to another place, this is ſtill a much greater " good." And ſoon after, having ſaid, that " thoſe who live

(*m*) See Plato's Phædo, Opera, p. 377. H. edit. Lugd.

(*n*) Ibid. p. 401. A.

" there

" there are both in other reſpects happier than we, and alſo in " this, that for the reſt of their time they are immortal," he again repeats what he had ſaid before; " If the things which are " told us are true," Ἐιπερ τὰ λεγόμενα ἀληθῆ ἔστιν: where he ſeems to refer to ſome antient traditions, which were looked upon as divine, and which he hoped were true, but which he was not abſolutely ſure of.

And he concludes his apology with theſe remarkable words; " It is now time to depart hence: I am going to die; you ſhall " continue in life; but which of us ſhall be in a better ſtate, is " unknown to all but God (*o*)."

What has been obſerved concerning Socrates, holds equally concerning Plato, who generally ſpeaks his own ſentiments, eſpecially in what relates to the immortality of the ſoul and a future ſtate, by the mouth of Socrates.

None of the antient philoſophers has argued better for the immortality of the ſoul than Cicero; but at the ſame time he takes care to let us know, that he followed only that which appeared to him the moſt probable conjecture, and which was the utmoſt he could attain to, but did not take upon him to affirm it as certain. This is what he declares in the beginning of his diſcourſe upon that ſubject: " Ut homunculus unus à multis probabilia " conjecturâ ſequens, ultra enim quo progredior, quàm ut veri-

(*o*) See Plato's Phædo, Opera, p. 368. H. 369. A. C, D. edit. Lugd.

" ſimilia videam, non habeo (*p*)." And after having mentioned a great variety of opinions about the human ſoul, and particularly whether it dies with the body, or ſurvives it; and if the latter, whether it is to have a perpetual exiſtence, or is only to continue for a time after its departure from the body; he concludes with ſaying, " Which of theſe opinions is true, ſome god muſt de-" termine. Which is moſt probable, is a great queſtion."—" Ha-" rum ſententiarum quæ vera ſit deus aliquis viderit: quæ veri-" ſimillima magna quæſtio eſt (*q*)."

The uncertainty the moſt excellent Pagan philoſophers were under with regard to a future ſtate farther appears, in that in their diſputations and diſcourſes, which were deſigned to fortify themſelves or others againſt the fear of death, as alſo in their conſolatory diſcourſes on the death of deceaſed friends, they ſtill proceeded upon alternatives; that death is either a tranſlation to a better ſtate, or is an utter extinction of being, or at leaſt a ſtate of inſenſibility. It was with this conſideration that Socrates comforted himſelf under the near proſpect of death, as appears from the paſſages already produced. In like manner Cicero's whole diſputation in his celebrated book above-mentioned, the profeſſed deſign of which is to fortify men againſt the fear of death, turns upon this alternative, with which he concludes his diſcourſe: That " if the day of our death brings with it not an extinction of our

(*p*) Tuſcul. Diſput. lib. i. cap. 9.

(*q*) Ibid. cap. 11.

" being,

" being, but only a change of our abode, nothing can be more " deſirable; but if it abſolutely deſtroys and puts an end to our " exiſtence, what can be better than, amidſt the labours and " troubles of this life, to reſt in a profound and eternal ſleep?"— " Si ſupremus ille dies non extinctionem, ſed commutationem " adfer tloci, quid optabilius? Sin autèm perimit ac delet omnino, " quid melius quam in mediis vitæ laboribus obdormiſcere, et " ità conniventem ſomno conſopiri ſempiterno (*r*)?" And this is the conſideration that he ſeems to me to rely principally upon.

There are ſeveral paſſages of Seneca to the ſame purpoſe, ſome of which are cited above, p. 324. To which I ſhall add one more from his Conſolation to Polybius, who was grieved for the death of his brother. He directs him to argue with himſelf thus: " If the dead have no ſenſe, my brother has eſcaped from all the " incommodities of life, and is reſtored to that ſtate he was in before " he was born; and being free from all evil, fears nothing, deſires " nothing, ſuffers nothing. If the dead have any ſenſe, the ſoul of " my brother, being let looſe as it were from a long confinement, " and entirely his own maſter, exults, and enjoys a clear ſight of " the nature of things, and looks down as from a higher ſituation " upon all things human with contempt; and he has a nearer " view of divine things, the reaſons of which he has long ſought " for in vain. Why therefore do I languiſh for the want of " him, who is either happy, or not at all? To lament one

(*r*) Tuſcul. Diſput. lib. i. cap. 49.

" that

" that is happy is envy, and one that has no exiſtence is mad-
" neſs (*s*)."

Plutarch, as was before obſerved, has ſeveral paſſages, from which it may be concluded that he looked upon the immortality of the ſoul as a probable opinion, yet he ſometimes expreſſes himſelf in a manner which ſeems to ſhew that he either did not believe it, or was not certain of it. In his conſolation to Apollonius he obſerves, that Socrates ſaid that death is either like to a deep ſleep, or to a journey afar off and of a long continuance, or to the entire extinction of ſoul and body. This he quotes with approbation, and ſets himſelf diſtinctly to ſhew, that in none of theſe views can death be conſidered as an evil (*t*). And in the treatiſe which is deſigned to prove that no man can live pleaſantly, according to the tenets of Epicurus, ſpeaking of the hope of immortality, he calls it ἡ περὶ τὸ μυθωδὲς τὸ ἀιδιότητος ἐλπὶς, " the

(*s*) Senec. Conſol. ad Polyb. cap. 27. " Si nullus defunctis ſenſus ſit, evaſit " omnia frater meus vitæ incommoda; et in eum reſtitutus eſt locum, in quo fu- " erat antequàm naſceretur, et expers omnis mali nihil timet, nihil cupit, nihil " patitur. Si eſt aliquis defunctis ſenſus, nunc animus fratris mei, velut ex diu- " tino carcere miſſus, tandem ſui juris et arbitrii, geſtit, et rerum naturæ ſpecta- " culo fruitur, et humana omnia ex ſuperiore loco deſpicit, divina verò, quorum " rationem tamdiu fruſtrà quæſierat, propiùs intuetur. Quid itaque ejus deſide- " rio maceror, qui aut beatus aut nullus eſt? Beatum deflere, invidia eſt, nullum " dementia."

(*t*) Plutarch. Opera, tom. II. p. 107. D. Here one part of the alternative is the utter extinction of being; and he endeavours to ſhew, that on that ſuppoſition death is not an evil; and yet, ibid. p. 1105. A. in his treatiſe Non poſſe ſuaviter viv. he very juſtly argues, that the notion of utter diſſolution and extinction at death does not take away the fear of death, but rather confirms it; ſince this very thing is what nature has a ſtrong averſion to.

" fabulous hope of immortality." Or, as the learned Mr. Baxter renders it in his Engliſh tranſlation of that tract, " The hope " conceived of eternity from the tales and fables of the anti- " ents (*u*)." And in his treatiſe of ſuperſtition, he ſuppoſes death to be the final period of our exiſtence, and that the fear of any thing after it is the effect of ſuperſtition: " Death (ſays he) is to " all men the end of life, but to ſuperſtition it is not ſo. She " ſtretches out her bounds beyond thoſe of life, and makes her " fears of a longer duration than our exiſtence." Πέρας τῦ βίε πασιν ἀνθρώποις ὁ θάνατος, τῆς δὲ δεισιδαιμονίας οὐδ' ἐτος, ἀλλ' ὑπεξάλλει τὲς ὅρες ἐπεκεινα τῦ ζῆν, μακρότερον τῦ βίε ποιῦσα τὸν φόβον (*x*).

So great is the inconſiſtency which frequently appears in the writings of the antient philoſophers on this and other articles of importance. They are ſo often varying in their doctrine, ſeeming to affirm in one place what they treat as fabulous and uncertain in another, that ſome very learned perſons have thought it could not be otherwiſe accounted for, than by ſuppoſing a great difference between what is called the exoteric and eſoteric doctrine; i. e. the doctrine they taught openly to the people, and that which they taught privately to their diſciples, whom they let into the ſecrets of their ſcheme. I ſhall not enter into the controverſy about the meaning of the diſtinction between the exoteric and eſoteric doctrine of the antients. I am apt to think that it relates ſometimes

(*u*) Plutarch. Opera, tom. II. p. 1104. C.

(*x*) Plutarch. de Superſtit. Opera, tom. II. p. 166. F. edit. Xyl.

to

to their treating on different ſubjects, and ſometimes to their different manner of treating the ſame ſubject. For the ſame doctrine was often delivered by the philoſophers both to their diſciples and to the people; to the one in a groſs and popular, to the other in a more philoſophical and abſtracted way. That this was one principal thing intended by that diſtinction, may be juſtly concluded from that noted paſſage of Cicero, where, ſpeaking of the doctrine of the Peripatetics concerning the ſummum bonum or chief good, he mentions two kinds of books publiſhed by them; ſome written in the popular way, which they called exoteric, the other more accurately and philoſophically, which they left in commentaries; and that though they do not always ſeem to ſay the ſame things, yet in the main there was in reality no difference or diſagreement between them. "De ſummo autem bono, quia duo genera "librorum ſunt, unum populariter ſcriptum quod ἐξωτερικὸν ad- "pellârunt, alterum limatius quod in commentariis reliquerunt, "non ſemper idem dicere videntur: nec in ſummâ tamen ipſâ "aut varietas eſt ulla apud hos quidem quos nominavi, aut inter "ipſos diſſenſio (*y*)." But whatever may be ſuppoſed to be the preciſe meaning of exoterical and eſoterical, as applied to the writings of the antient philoſophers, and though it is not a proof, or even a preſumption, of a doctrine's not being agreeable to their real ſentiments, becauſe it was taught in their exoterical or popular diſcourſes, yet, on the other hand, it cannot well be denied, that they ſometimes choſe to diſguiſe their ſentiments, and conceal them from the people: and that we cannot always be ſure that what

(*y*) Cic. de Finib. Bon. et Mal. lib. v. cap. 5. p. 353. edit. Davis.

they delivered in their popular diſcourſes was what they themſelves believed to be true. It was a maxim among many of the antients, that it was lawful to deceive the people for the public good. They were for the moſt part not very ſtrict in their notions with reſpect to the obligations of truth; and thought there was no harm in making uſe of falſhood when it was profitable. This was what Plato himſelf made no ſcruple to avow; concerning which, ſee above, p. 249. And in this he was followed by other Platoniſts, of which we have a remarkable inſtance in Syneſius. He was raiſed to a biſhopric in the Chriſtian church, but continued to be a determined Platoniſt, and had ſo far imbibed the ſpirit and doctrine of that ſchool, as to declare, That " philoſophy, when " it has attained to the truth, allows the uſe of lies and fictions." He adds, " As darkneſs is moſt proper and commodious for " thoſe who have weak eyes, ſo I hold that lies and fictions are " uſeful to the people, and that truth would be hurtful to thoſe " who are not able to bear its light and ſplendour; and he pro- " miſes if the laws of the church would diſpenſe with it, that he " would philoſophize at home, and talk abroad in the common " ſtrain, preaching up the general and received fables (z)." In this

(z) The reader may ſee this, and other teſtimonies to the ſame purpoſe, produced by the celebrated author of the Divine Legation of Moſes. Vol. II. book iii. ſect. 2. p. 92. et ſeq. edit. 4th. and alſo by the learned and judicious author of the Critical Enquiry into the Opinions and Practices of the antient Philoſophers, chap. 11. To this I would add, that this method of the double doctrine, the one ſuppoſed to be ſtrictly and philoſophically true, the other in ſeveral inſtances falſe, but accommodated to the people, and deſigned for moral and political purpoſes, has long been in uſe in the eaſt, and continues ſtill to be ſo. This is particularly obſerved

this he certainly acted not according to the ſpirit of the Goſpel, which allows no ſuch methods of falſhood and deceit; but it was not unſuitable to the maxims of many of the philoſophers. And this tends not a little to weaken their credit, and often makes it difficult to know their real ſentiments, eſpecially if in different parts of their works they advance different notions on the ſame ſubject. It ſeems to be a reaſonable rule which is laid down by ſome learned critics, that when in one place they expreſs themſelves agreeably to the popular opinions, and in another ſeem to contradict them, in the former caſe they accommodate themſelves to the notions of the people, and in the other ſpeak their own ſentiments. But yet I am apt to think, that the inconſiſtencies which may be obſerved in the writings of the antients, particularly with regard to the immortality of the ſoul and a future ſtate, are not always to be charged upon this; but are often owing to their not having fixed notions, or a full aſſurance of thoſe things in their own minds. The uncertainty they were under was, I doubt not, often the true ſource of their variations, and of their am-

obſerved concerning the learned ſect in China *. F. Longobardi aſſures us, that ſome of their doctors made no ſcruple to declare to him, that the better to govern the people, they taught them ſeveral things which they themſelves did not believe to be true. See his treatiſe in Navarette's Account of the Empire of China, p. 174, 175. and alſo p. 186, and 198. And in the Account Navarette there gives of the tenets of the ſect of Foe, he takes notice of their exterior and interior doctrine: the latter of which is contrary to the former, eſpecially with regard to a future ſtate. They publicly preach it up to the people, but their interior doctrine rejects it. The ſame is ſaid concerning the Bonzes. See Navarette's Account of the Empire of China, book ii. chap. 11. p. 78, 79. in the firſt volume of Churchill's Collection of Travels and Voyages.

* See the former volume of this work, chap. 11. in the beginning.

biguous,

biguous, and ſometimes contradictory way of talking on this ſubject.

To this uncertainty it was owing, that, in their moral ſyſtems, they did not apply the doctrine of a future ſtate to the excellent ends and purpoſes for which it ſeems naturally to be fitted and deſigned. There are two principal uſes to be made of it, where it is heartily believed. The one is, to ſupport men againſt the troubles and ſorrows of this preſent ſtate, and the fear of death: the other is, to animate men to the practice of virtue amidſt the many difficulties and diſcouragements to which they are here expoſed.

As to the former of theſe, any one that is acquainted with the writings of thoſe philoſophers who lived before the coming of our Saviour, will find that there is little ſtreſs laid on the doctrine of a future ſtate, for ſupporting or comforting men under the various troubles and ſorrows of this preſent life, or for raiſing them above the fear of death.

Cicero indeed, in his firſt book of the Tuſculan Diſputations, the title of which is De morte contemnendâ, has brought many arguments, which he manages with great eloquence, to prove the immortality of the ſoul: but, as has been already obſerved, the conſideration he ſeems principally to rely upon for ſupporting men againſt the fears of death, proceeds upon an alternative, which includes a ſuppoſition that the ſoul may die. For he argues, that either the ſoul ſhall be immortal and go to another ſtate, or it

ſhall be extinguiſhed at death, and deprived of all ſenſe: and that on either of theſe ſuppoſitions, death is not an evil, nor therefore to be feared. And in his following diſputations, he makes no uſe of the doctrine of the immortality of the ſoul and a future ſtate, though the ſubjects he treats of naturally led him to take ſome notice of it, if he had thought it might be depended upon. The ſubject of the ſecond of theſe diſputations is De tolerando dolore. That of the third De ægritudine leniendâ. The fourth treats De reliquis animi perturbationibus. But though a variety of conſiderations are offered, yet in none of theſe treatiſes is there one word of comfort or ſupport drawn from the hope of immortality. All terminates in a man's ſupporting himſelf by the ſtrength of his own mind, and the force of his virtue; and in endeavouring to perſuade men that none of the things which are generally accounted good or evil, are really good or evil, but are ſo in opinion only. And when he mentions the ſeveral methods of conſolation propoſed and inſiſted upon by the philoſophers, not the leaſt hint is given of a happier ſtate of exiſtence after this life is at an end (*a*). The fifth book of thoſe diſputations is deſigned to ſhew, that virtue is of itſelf ſufficient for a happy life, "virtutem ad beatè vivendum ſeipſâ eſſe contentam." And in this whole diſputation he abſtracts entirely from the conſideration of a future happineſs or reward.

The ſame obſervation may be made on his five celebrated books De Finibus Bonorum et Malorum. The deſign of them is to

(*a*) See particularly Tuſcul. Diſput. lib. iii. cap. 31 et 32.

enquire

enquire into the ſummum bonum, or chief happineſs of man. But in this whole enquiry no notice is taken of a future ſtate. It is all along ſuppoſed that a man is capable of attaining to a perfect happineſs in this preſent life, and he is never directed to look beyond it to any future recompence, or to expect a complete happineſs in the world to come.

As to the other main uſe to be made of the doctrine of a future ſtate, for animating men to the practice of virtue, this alſo had little or no place in their moral ſyſtems. They ſeem to have looked upon this as too uncertain a thing to be relied upon, and therefore endeavoured to find out motives to virtue, independent on the belief of the rewards prepared for good men after this life is at an end. They repreſented in an elegant and beautiful manner the preſent conveniencies and advantages of virtue, and the ſatisfaction which attends it: but eſpecially they inſiſted upon its intrinſic excellency, its dignity and beauty, and agreeableneſs to reaſon and nature, and its ſelf-ſufficiency to happineſs, which many of them, eſpecially the Stoics, the moſt rigid moraliſts among them, carried to a very high degree. Cicero in his Offices, and thoſe excellent philoſophers Epictetus and Marcus Antoninus in their works, which ſeem to be the beſt moral treatiſes which Pagan antiquity has left us, go upon this ſcheme. They were ſenſible indeed, that in order to recommend virtue to the eſteem of mankind, and engage them to purſue it, it was neceſſary to ſhew that it would be for their own higheſt advantage. Cicero obſerves, that all men naturally deſire profit, and cannot do otherwiſe (*b*): and that if

(*b*) De Offic. lib. iii. cap. 28.

virtue

virtue be not profitable, men will not purſue it: and therefore he, as Socrates had done before, finds great fault with thoſe who were for ſeparating profit from honeſty. He treats that maxim, which he ſays is a common one, that a thing may be honeſt without being profitable, and profitable without being honeſt, as the moſt pernicious notion, and the moſt deſtructive of all goodneſs, that ever entered into the minds of men (*c*): and that to ſeparate profit from honeſty is to pervert the firſt principles of nature (*d*). He therefore prefers the doctrine of the Stoics, who affirm, that whatſoever is honeſt muſt be alſo profitable, and that nothing is profitable but what is alſo honeſt, to that of the Peripatetics, who ſay, there are ſome things honeſt which are not profitable, and ſome things profitable which are not honeſt (*e*). This maxim of the Stoics, that virtue is always moſt profitable, would certainly have been very juſt, if they had taken in the conſideration of a future ſtate, and argued, that beſides the conſideration of its natural excellency and good tendency, the all-wiſe and good Governor of the world will take care, that if good men be expoſed to grievous temporal evils and ſufferings, which he may permit for the trial and exerciſe of their virtue in this preſent ſtate, they ſhall be compenſated with glorious rewards in the world to come; ſo that in the final iſſue of things the greateſt profit and happineſs will upon the whole attend the practice and purſuit of real virtue

(*c*) De Offic. lib. ii. cap. 3. et lib. iii. cap. 12.

(*d*) Ibid. lib. iii. cap. 28.

(*e*) Ibid. lib. iii. cap. 4.

and righteouſneſs. But this was not the way the Stoics and the moſt eminent philoſophers took. They affirmed that honeſt and profitable were exactly the ſame thing, and diſtinguiſhable only by an act of the mind (*f*). That virtue is the moſt profitable thing in the world, as being its own reward, and carrying a complete happineſs in its own nature inſeparable from it, abſtracting from all conſideration of a future recompence, or of any reward conferred upon thoſe that practiſe it by the holy and beneficent Governor of the world. They had nothing therefore left but to perſuade men, as well as they could, that ſuppoſing a good and virtuous man to be under the greateſt outward torments which can be ſuppoſed, ſtill he was at that very inſtant happy, uninterruptedly happy in the higheſt degree, merely by the independent force of his own virtue, abſtracting from all other conſiderations whatſoever. But though this was a very magnificent way of talking, and ſeemed to ſhew a high ſenſe of the dignity and excellency of virtue, it was too extravagant to have any great effect on the minds of men, or to ſupport them in the practice of virtue under ſtrong temptations, and ſevere difficulties and trials. The Peripatetic maxim, which Cicero finds ſo much fault with, that there are ſome things honeſt which are not profitable, and ſome things profitable which are not honeſt, is agreeable to obſervation and experience, if we confine our views to this preſent life and ſtate of things. Many inſtances may be ſuppoſed, and have actually happened, in which a man may be a loſer in this preſent ſtate by his ſteady adherence to the cauſe of truth and righteouſneſs, and his

(*f*) De Offic. lib. ii. cap. 3.

virtue,

virtue, inſtead of turning to his advantage, may bring upon him great calamities and ſufferings of various kinds. The obſervation of that excellent critic and hiſtorian Dionyſius Halicarnaſſeus is founded in common ſenſe, and was no doubt the ſentiment of many perſons of learning and judgment in the Heathen world. " If, ſaith he, along with the diſſolution of the body, the ſoul " alſo, whatſoever it is, be diſſolved, I know not how thoſe can " be ſuppoſed to be happy, who have enjoyed no advantage by " virtue, but have periſhed on the account of it." *Εἰ μὲν ἓν ἅμα τοῖς σώμασι τοῖς διαλελυμένοις, καὶ τὸ τῆς ψυχῆς ὅταν δὴ ποτε ἔῃ ἐκεῖνό, συνδιαλύεται, ἐκ οἶδα ὅπως μακαρίους ὑπολάβω τοὺς μηδὲν ἀπολαύσαντας τῆς ἀρετῆς ἀγαθὸν, δι' αὐτὴν δὲ τὰύτην ἀπολωμένους* (*g*).

As the uncertainty the philoſophers were under with regard to a future ſtate ſeems to have been one principal reaſon of their crying up the abſolute ſufficiency of virtue to happineſs, abſtracting from all conſideration of a future reward, ſo it was probably from the ſame views that ſeveral of them, eſpecially the Stoics, advanced that ſtrange maxim, that the duration of happineſs contributes nothing to the rendering it more compleat and deſirable. It was a principle with Chryſippus, and which, as Plutarch informs us, he frequently repeated, that " the length of time " does not increaſe any good." *Ὅτι ἀγαθὸν χρόνος ἐκ αὔξει προσγενόμενος.* And in a paſſage quoted by Plutarch from his ſixth book of Moral Queſtions, he directly aſſerts, that " men are nei- " ther more happy for being longer ſo, nor is eternal felicity more

(*g*) Dionyſ. Halicar. Antiq. lib. viii. p. 529.

" eligible than that which is but for a moment." Plutarch juſtly expoſes this way of talking as contrary to common ſenſe, and ſhews that in this as well as ſeveral other inſtances Chryſippus contradicted himſelf (*b*). Nor was this merely an extraordinary ſlight of Chryſippus, but was the common doctrine of the Stoics. Cato ſays, " Stoicis non videtur optabilior, nec magis expetenda " beata vita, ſi ſit longa, quam ſi brevis (*i*)." Marcus Antoninus himſelf frequently intimates, that length of time makes no difference as to the perfection of virtue and happineſs, that " three " hours of ſuch a life are ſufficient (*k*)." And he ſuppoſes, that though a man has lived but a ſhort time, the action of life may be a complete whole without any defect; πλήρες καὶ ἀπροσδεὲς (*l*). So that he may attain in this ſhort life to the complete happineſs and perfection of his nature. Theſe maxims, underſtood as they were by the Stoics, proceeded upon a wrong ſuppoſition. It is true, that a good man may in a ſhort time ſo far fulfil the work which is given him to do, and ſo well act the part appointed him here on earth, as to be graciouſly accepted of God, though not abſolutely without defect, and to be rendered meet for that future ſtate, where he ſhall attain to the true perfection and felicity of his nature; but to ſuppoſe that in the preſent ſtate of the human nature, he can in the ſhort compaſs of this mortal

(*b*) Plutarch de Stoic. Repugn. Oper. tom. II. p. 1046. et de Commun. Notit. ibid. p. 1060, 1061.

(*i*) Apud Cic. de Finib. lib. iii. cap. 14.

(*k*) Anton. lib. vi. ſect. 23.

(*l*) Ibid. lib. xi. ſect. 1.

life

life arrive to the utmoſt perfection of virtue and happineſs " with-
" out any defect," and that the narrow term of this preſent life is as ſufficient for this purpoſe, as if he were to live for ever in a future happy ſtate of exiſtence, is an extravagant way of talking, and of pernicious conſequence, as it tends to quench the generous aſpirations after immortality, which, as Cicero obſerves, are the ſtrongeſt in the nobleſt minds. For why ſhould they aſpire after it, if, as Balbus the Stoic affirms, " immortality conduces nothing to an " happy life?" " Nihil ad beatè vivendum pertinet." But how much juſter is the obſervation of Plato; " what can be truly great " in ſo ſmall a proportion of time? The whole age of man from " his earlieſt childhood to extreme old age, being very ſmall and " inconſiderable (*m*)."

And indeed notwithſtanding the expedients contrived by the philoſophers for making the perfection of virtue and happineſs compleat, abſtracting from all conſideration of a future ſtate, yet ſome of them could not help acknowledging, that the belief of a future ſtate is of great importance to the cauſe of virtue in the world. Socrates, who, as the learned biſhop of Glouceſter allows, really believed a future ſtate of retributions, after having mentioned the judges in Hades, and their aſſigning rewards to good men and puniſhments to the wicked, adds, " by ſuch ſay-
" ings as theſe I am perſuaded, and make it my aim, that I may
" appear before my judges [Æacus or Minos] having a moſt pure
" and ſound mind." And he goes on to declare, that therefore

(*m*) Plato's Republ. x.

he-

he " would endeavour, to the utmoſt of his power, to live and " die a very good man :" and exhorts others to do ſo too (*n*)." And he concludes his diſcourſe in the Phædo with obſerving, that on the account of what he had ſaid concerning the rewards and happy abodes prepared for good men in a future ſtate, " it is ne- " ceſſary to do what we can to attain to wiſdom and virtue in this " life. For, ſays he, the prize or reward of the conflict is ex- " cellent, and the hope is great." Καλὸν γὰρ τὸ ἄθλον, καὶ ἡ ἐλ- πὶς μεγάλη. He adds, that it does not become any man of un- derſtanding peremptorily to affirm that theſe things are as he had repreſented them; but that it is reaſonable to think that theſe things, or ſomething like them, are true, and that it is worth mak- ing a trial though with hazard, for the trial is noble (*o*).

Plutarch in his treatiſe, that no man can live happily according to the tenets of Epicurus, repreſents thoſe who have led pious and juſt lives as expecting glorious and divine things after death; and " that it is admirable to think how carefully they apply their " minds to virtue, οἷον φρονοῦσι τῇ ἀρετῇ; who believe that as the " athletæ in the public games do not receive the crown till after " they have gone through the conteſt and proved victorious, ſo " the reward of the victory atchieved by good men in this life is " reſerved for them after this life is at an end (*p*)." And he after- wards ſays, that " they who look upon death to be the beginning

(*n*) See at the end of Plato's Gorgias, Opera, p. 314. B. edit. Lugd.

(*o*) Ibid. p. 401. A.

(*p*) Plutarch. Opera, tom. II. p. 1105. C.

" of

" of another and a better life, have both more pleaſure in the good " things they now enjoy than other men, as expecting ſtill greater " hereafter; and if things do not go according to their mind they " do not take it much amiſs; but the hopes of good things after " death, which contain ſuch ineffable pleaſures and expectations, " take away and obliterate every defect and offence out of the " ſoul; which thereby is enabled to bear the things which befal " it with eaſe and moderation (*q*)." I cannot but remark on this occaſion, that at the time when Plutarch flouriſhed, Chriſtianity had made a conſiderable progreſs in the world, and with it the knowledge and hope of life and immortality, or of eternal happineſs for the good and righteous, was far more generally diffuſed than before. It is true, that ſome notion of the immortality of the ſoul, and the rewards and puniſhments of a future ſtate, had obtained among the nations from the moſt remote antiquity, though mixed with much obſcurity and many fables; but at the time of our Saviour's coming the belief of theſe things was, as I ſhall have occaſion to ſhew, very much loſt even among the people, eſpecially in the Roman empire, then the moſt knowing and civilized part of the Gentile world. But wherever the light of Chriſtianity ſhone, the doctrine of eternal life was openly profeſſed by thoſe that embraced it; and the notion of it came to ſpread more and more among the Heathens themſelves. The belief of that future happineſs had produced wonderful effects in the converts to Chriſtianity, both in their conſtancy and even joy under the greateſt ſufferings, taken notice of by the Pagan writers them-

(*q*) Plutarch. Oper. tom. II. p. 1106 A, E.

ſelves;

ſelves (*r*), and in the purity and innocency of their lives and manners. To this Pliny gives a noble teſtimony in his celebrated epiſtle to Trajan, who lived about the ſame time with Plutarch. The Chriſtian apologiſts, in their public writings addreſſed to the emperors, frequently mention the virtuouſneſs and regularity of their lives, as a thing that could not be denied even by their bittereſt adverſaries. Celſus himſelf, notwithſtanding his ſtrong prejudices againſt Chriſtianity, yet owns that there were among Chriſtians temperate, modeſt, and underſtanding perſons, καὶ μετρίως καὶ ἐπιεικεῖς, καὶ συνετοὺς (*s*). I do not therefore ſee any abſurdity in ſuppoſing, that when Plutarch ſpeaks of pious and juſt perſons that expected ſuch glorious and divine things after death, he might have a ſecret reference to the Chriſtians, the purity of whoſe lives, and their being ſtrongly animated by the hopes of a bleſſed immortality, was well known; and if he thought them in an error, he might think them "felices errore ſuo," happy in their error, as Lucan expreſſes it, and that their hope of future happineſs had a

(*r*) Epictetus and Marcus Antoninus, among others, repreſent the Chriſtians as ſhewing great fortitude, and a contempt of death, but attribute it to habit and obſtinacy, though it was built on a much nobler foundation than Stoicism could pretend to. Epict. Differt. book iv. chap. 7. ſect. 2. and Anton. Medit. book xi. ſect. 3. In the Glaſgow tranſlation of Antoninus there is a note upon the paſſage now referred to, which deſerves to be tranſcribed here. "It is well known, that "the ardor of Chriſtians for the glory of martyrdom was frequently immoderate, "and was cenſured by ſome even of the primitive fathers. This is no diſhonour "to Chriſtianity, that it did not quite extirpate all ſorts of human frailty. And "there is ſomething ſo noble in the ſtedfaſt lively faith, and the ſtable perſuaſion "of a future ſtate, which muſt have ſupported that ardor, that it makes a ſuffi"cient apology for this weakneſs, and gives the ſtrongeſt confirmation of the di"vine power accompanying the Goſpel."

(*s*) Orig. cont. Celſ. lib. i. p. 22. edit. Spenſer.

good effect upon them, which was very proper to the purpoſe he had in view in that treatiſe; his never expreſly mentioning the Chriſtians in all his works, though a man ſo curious as he was may well be ſuppoſed to have had ſome knowledge of them, as they were then very numerous both in Greece and Rome and in ſeveral parts of the Leſſer Aſia, ſeems to be an affected ſilence: and it may poſſibly be owing to this, that as he did not think proper to give a favourable account of them, ſo on the other hand he had no mind to ſpeak ill of them, and therefore choſe not to ſpeak of them at all.

CHAP. VII.

A ſtate of future rewards neceſſarily connotes future puniſhments. The belief of the former without the latter might be of pernicious conſequence. The antient philoſophers and legiſlators were ſenſible of the importance and neceſſity of the doctrine of future puniſhments. Yet they generally rejected and diſcarded them as vain and ſuperſtitious terrors. The maxim univerſally held by the philoſophers, that the gods are never angry, and can do no hurt, conſidered.

THE doctrine of a future ſtate comprehends both the rewards conferred upon good men, and the puniſhments which ſhall be inflicted upon the wicked in the world to come. The one of theſe cannot be rightly ſeparated from the other. And the belief of the latter is at leaſt as neceſſary as the former; and without which the conſideration and belief of a future ſtate will have no great influence on the moral ſtate of mankind.

It is a good obſervation of M. de Monteſquieu, that the idea of a place of future rewards neceſſarily imports that of a place or ſtate of future puniſhments: and that when the people hope for the one without fearing the other, civil laws have no force (*t*). It would probably among other ill effects encourage ſelf-murder,

(*t*) L'Eſprit des Loix, Vol. II. liv. 24. chap. 14. p. 162. edit. Edinb.

which

which is ſaid to be very common among the diſciples of Fo in China, who hold the immortality of the ſoul (*u*). Several paſſages might be produced to ſhew that the wiſeſt of the Heathens were ſenſible of the great importance and neceſſity of the doctrine of future puniſhments as well as rewards, to the well-being of ſociety. Accordingly this always made a part of the repreſentations of a future ſtate exhibited in the myſteries, which were under the direction of the civil magiſtrate. Zaleucus in his excellent preface to his laws repreſents it as a thing which ought to be believed, that the gods inflict puniſhments upon the wicked. And he concludes with taking notice of the happineſs of the juſt, and the vengeance attending the wicked (*x*). Future puniſhments are here plainly implied, though not directly mentioned. Timæus the Pythagorean at the latter end of his treatiſe of the ſoul of the world, praiſes the Ionian poet for recording from antient tradition the endleſs or irremiſſible torments prepared for the unhappy dead. And he adds, that there is a neceſſity of inculcating the dread of theſe ſtrange or foreign puniſhments. Plato in his fourth book of Laws takes notice of an antient tradition concerning the juſtice of God as puniſhing the tranſgreſſors of his law. " God, as an-
" tient tradition teacheth, having or holding in himſelf the be-
" ginning, the end, and middle of all things that are, purſues the
" right way, going about according to nature, and juſtice always
" accompanies and follows him, which is a puniſher of thoſe

(*u*) See a treatiſe of a Chineſe philoſopher in Du Halde's Hiſtory of China vol. III. p. 272. Engliſh tranſlation.

(*x*) Apud Stob. ſerm. 42.

" that fall ſhort of the divine law (*y*)." This paſſage repreſents God as a juſt puniſher of tranſgreſſors, but makes no expreſs mention of the puniſhments of a future ſtate. But in another paſſage in his ſeventh epiſtle, written to Dion's friends, which I had occaſion to mention before, ſee above p. 305. he ſays, " we " ought always to believe the antient and ſacred words, or tradi- " tions, which ſhew both that the ſoul is immortal, and that it " hath judges, and ſuffers the greateſt puniſhments, when it " leaves the body (*z*)." And on ſeveral other occaſions, when ſpeaking of a future ſtate, he takes notice of the puniſhments which ſhall be inflicted upon the wicked, and deſcribes them in a popular and poetical manner. In the concluſion of his Phædo, he introduces Socrates, in one of his moſt ſerious and ſolemn diſcourſes juſt before his death, talking after the manner of the poets of the judges after death, of Tartarus, Acheron, the Acheruſian lake, Pyriphlegethon, and Cocytus: that ſome after having gone through various puniſhments ſhall be purged and abſolved, and after certain periods ſhall be freed from their puniſhments: " But " thoſe who by reaſon of the greatneſs of their ſins ſeem to be in- " curable, who have committed many and great ſacrileges, or " unjuſt and unlawful murders, and other crimes of the like na- " ture, ſhall have a fate ſuitable to them, being thrown down " into Tartarus, from whence they never ſhall eſcape (*a*)." The

(*y*) Ὁ μὲν δὴ θεὸς (ὥσπερ καὶ ὁ παλαιὸς λόγος) ἀρχὴν τε καὶ τελευτὴν, καὶ τὰ μέσα τῶν ὄντων ἁπάντων ἔχων, εὐθεῖαν περαίνει κατὰ φύσιν περιπορευόμενος· τῷ δὲ ἀεὶ ξυνέπεται δικὴ τῶν ἀπολειπομένων τὸ θεῖον νόμα τιμωρός Plat. Oper. p. 600. G. edit. Lugd.

(*z*) Ibid. p. 716. A.

(*a*) Ibid. p. 400. F.

like

like repreſentation is made at the latter end of Plato's tenth Republic, in the ſtory of Erus Armenius. In his Gorgias alſo he ſuppoſes the wicked, and thoſe who were incurable, to be ſent to Tartarus, where they ſhall be puniſhed with endleſs torments, as an example to others: and he approves of Homer, for repreſenting wicked kings who had tyrannized over mankind, among thoſe who ſhould be ſo puniſhed (*b*). There is another paſſage in his Phædo which ought not to be omitted. He ſays, that "if "death were to be the diſſolution of the whole, it would be good "news to bad men when they die, ἕρμαιον ἦν τοῖς κακοῖς ἀποθανοῦσι, "to have an end put to their body, and to their own pravity, "as well as to their ſouls: but that ſince the ſoul appears to be "immortal, there is no other way of eſcaping evil, no other ſafe-"ty, but to become as good and as wiſe as they can (*c*)." Cicero in his ſecond book of Laws, ſhewing the uſefulneſs of religion to ſociety, obſerves, that many have been reclaimed from wickedneſs by the fear of divine puniſhment. "Quam multos "divini ſupplicii metus à ſcelere revocavit (*d*)!"

Plutarch in his treatiſe, That it is not poſſible to live pleaſurably according to the Doctrine of Epicurus, obſerves, that Epicurus himſelf ſays, there is no other way of reſtraining bad men from doing evil and unjuſt actions, but by fear of puniſhment: and Plutarch gives it as his own opinion, that therefore it is proper to

(*b*) Plato. Oper. p. 313. E, F. edit. Lugd.

(*c*) Ibid. p. 397. H. p. 398. A.

(*d*) Cic. de Leg. lib. ii. cap. 7.

propoſe

propoſe to them all kinds of terrors and puniſhments, both from heaven and earth: and that it is for their own advantage to be deterred from perpetrating criminal actions by the fear of thoſe things which are to follow after death (*e*). And in his treatiſe De ſerâ Numinis vindictâ, he obſerves, that "if nothing remains "to the ſoul after the expiration of this life, but death puts an "end to all favour and all puniſhment, one might ſay that the "Deity dealt very tenderly and remiſsly with thoſe bad men, who "are puniſhed quickly, and die ſoon (*f*)."

If we proceed from the philoſophers to the poets, who were the popular divines, and generally ſpoke agreeably to the common notions and antient traditions, they often ſpeak of future puniſhments. This is particularly true of Homer. Euripides repreſents it as a certain thing, that whoſoever among mortals is bad and vicious is puniſhed by the gods.

——καὶ γὰρ ὅστις ἀν βρότων
Κακὸς πέφυκη ζημιῶσιν οἱ θεοὶ.

Eurip. Ion.

There is a paſſage which Juſtin Martyr aſcribes to Philemon, Clemens Alexandrinus and Theodoret to Diphylus, in which, after having ſaid, that there are in Hades two ſeveral paths, the one of the juſt, the other of the unjuſt, he adds, "don't be de-"ceived; there is a judgment in Hades, which God the Lord

(*e*) Plutarch. Opera, tom. II. p. 1105. edit. Xyl. Francof. 1620.

(*f*) Ibid. p. 555. C.

"of

" of all, whose dreadful name I dare not so much as mention, " will certainly execute." And soon after he says to those who imagined there is no God, " there is, there is a God; and if any " man does evil, he will certainly at length suffer punishment " for it (*g*)."

Virgil in his sixth Æneid, where he probably has a particular reference to the representations made of a future state in the mysteries, as well as to those made by Homer, represents several sorts of persons, who had been guilty of very heinous crimes, as adjudged to grievous punishments in Tartarus. Vers. 565 et seq.

The passages which have been produced shew that the wisest among the Heathens saw the importance of the doctrine of future punishments; and how necessary it was in their opinion to the preserving good order in the world. Celsus was so sensible of this, that he would not allow Christianity the honour of being thought to have taught this doctrine to mankind. He says, that " they [the Christians] rightly maintain, that those persons who " lead good lives shall be happy, and that the unjust shall be sub- " ject to eternal evils," οἱ δὲ ἄδικοι ταμπὰν αἰωνίοις κακοῖς συνέξονται: and he adds, that " from this doctrine neither they nor " any one else should depart (*h*)." What makes this testimony more remarkable is, that Celsus was an Epicurean, and therefore

(*g*) See Dr. Sykes's Principles and Connection of Natural and Revealed Religion, cap. xiv. p. 375.

(*h*) Origen cont. Cels. lib. viii. p. 409. edit. Spenser.

did

did not himself really believe this doctrine. It must therefore be only owing to the conviction he had that it was a doctrine useful to society. And it is proper to observe upon this occasion, that those among the Heathens who professed to believe, or would have the people to believe future punishments, thought it would not be sufficient to answer the end, if some of the punishments for incorrigible sinners, guilty of enormous crimes, were not eternal.

Notwithstanding what has been said, it cannot be denied, that many of the most celebrated philosophers have endeavoured to weaken and explode that doctrine of future punishments, which they themselves could not but acknowledge to be useful and even necessary to society.

It has been already shewn that Pythagoras, according to the account Ovid gives of his sentiments, which seems to be a just one, rejects the stories of future punishments as vain terrors. And Timæus, a celebrated disciple of his, at the same time that he says there is a necessity of inculcating the doctrine of those foreign torments, plainly intimates that he looks upon the accounts which are given of them to be fabulous and false.

Though Plato has many passages concerning future punishments, and even in some of his most serious discourses adopts the representations made of them by the poets; yet at other times he rejects them, as giving too frightful an idea of Hades, or the future state. In the beginning of his third Republic he declares his disapprobation

diſapprobation of them becauſe they tended to intimidate the ſoldiery. After ſaying that no man can be brave who fears death, he aſks, " do you think that that man will face death with cou- " rage, and in battle prefer death to ſlavery, who believes that " the things which are ſaid concerning the ſtate of the dead are " true, and as dreadful as they are repreſented?" He therefore blames thoſe who make ſuch a diſcouraging repreſentation of Hades, and would have them rather commend and praiſe it, " other- " wiſe they neither ſay the things that are true, nor what is pro- " per for military men to hear. Therefore, ſays he, all thoſe " direful and terrible names are to be rejected, Cocytus, and " Styx, and the Inferi, and the ghoſts of the dead, and all the " names of that kind, which cauſe all that hear them to ſhudder " and tremble (*i*)." Nothing can be a more expreſs condemnation of the doctrine he himſelf introduces Socrates as delivering in his Phædo, the very day of his death: and the reaſon he here gives for rejecting theſe things, viz. the not rendering death frightful, will hold not merely againſt the poetical repreſentations, but againſt all future puniſhments after death, which yet he elſewhere repreſents as antient and ſacred traditions, to which an entire cre-

(*i*) Οὐκᾶν ἔτι καὶ τὰ περὶ ταῦτα ὀνόματα πάντα δεινὰ τε, καὶ φοβερὰ ἀποβλητέα, κωκυτὸς τὲ καὶ τύγας, καὶ ἐνέρους, καὶ ἀλίβαντας, καὶ ὅσα ἄλλα τύτων τῶν τύπων ὀνομαζόμενα φρίττειν δὲ ποιεῖ, ὡς οἷον τε, πάντας τὺς ἀκούοντας. Platon. Oper. p. 432. E. It may alſo be obſerved, that in his Cratylus Plato introduces Socrates, as blaming thoſe who repreſent Hades as a dark and gloomy abode, and derive the word from τὸ ἀειδὲς, as if it were void of light; and is rather for deriving it ἀπὸ τῦ πάντα τὰ κάλα εἰδέναι, from knowing all things good and beautiful. Here he excludes every thing from the notion of a future ſtate that might be apt to create terror, and ſeems to leave no room for future miſery.

dit is to be given. We muſt therefore either ſay, that Plato himſelf did not believe future puniſhments, or that from political views he judged it not proper to teach them to the people, that they might not have too frightful notions of death, which he thought would intimidate the citizens and ſoldiers. I would obſerve however, that he was not very conſiſtent in his politicks, ſince he ſometimes declares for rejecting the future puniſhments in Hades as not fit to be laid before the people, and yet at other times repreſents them as of great uſe for reſtraining men from vice and wickedneſs; which ſeems alſo to be the notion that the managers of the myſteries, who conſidered them in a political view, entertained of them.

None of the philoſophers argued better for the immortality of the ſoul, and a future ſtate in general, than Cicero. And yet in that very treatiſe where he takes the moſt pains to prove it, he diſcards the notion of future puniſhments, and openly diſavows and ridicules them. Having mentioned Cocytus, Acheron, and the infernal judges, and the puniſhments which were ſuppoſed to be inflicted upon bad men after death, he introduces his auditor as ſaying, "adeone me delirare cenſes, ut iſta credam?" "do you "think me ſo mad as to believe theſe things?" And again, "quis "eſt tam vecors quem iſta moveant?" "who is ſo ſenſeleſs as "to be moved by them?" Nor can it be pretended, that he only rejects the fabulous repreſentations made of theſe things by the poets, but admits the moral of thoſe fables, or what they were deſigned to ſignify, viz. that there ſhall be puniſhments inflicted upon the wicked after death. For the whole argument of that book

book is ſo conducted as to exclude future puniſhments. His profeſſed deſign is to fortify men againſt the fear of death, by proving that death is no evil. And his reaſoning turns upon this point, that either our ſouls ſhall be extinguiſhed at death, and then we ſhall have no ſenſe of evil; or if they ſurvive, and depart to another place (as he endeavours to prove they will) we ſhall be happy, and there is no future miſery to fear. And indeed, it may be obſerved concerning the philoſophers in general, that in all their conſolations againſt death, or diſcourſes to ſhew that death is not to be feared, they conſtantly argue thus, That death ſhall be either an extinction of being, and a ſtate of utter inſenſibility, or a remove to a better place; and they never once put the ſuppoſition of the ſoul's being expoſed to any evil or miſery in a future ſtate. The alternative ſtill was this, that they were either to be happy after death, or not to be at all. "Si maneat beati ſunt," ſays Cicero; or, as Seneca has it, "Aut beatus, aut nullus."

What little regard Cicero himſelf, or even the Roman people in general, had to the doctrine of future puniſhments, is evident from that noted paſſage in his oration for Aulus Cluentius, delivered before the judges, and a public aſſembly of the people. He is there ſpeaking of one Oppianicus, whom he repreſents as the worſt of men, guilty of the moſt atrocious crimes, of repeated murders of his wives and neareſt relations, and other heinous acts of wickedneſs, for which he was at length condemned and baniſhed. And he obſerves, that if he had been a man of ſpirit, he would have choſen rather to have put an end to his own life, than to have endured the miſeries of his exile. And as he was dead at

the time when Cicero made this oration, he aſks, " What evil hath " death brought upon him, except we are induced by ſilly fables " to think that he ſuffers the puniſhments of the wicked in the " infernal regions, and that he has met with more enemies there " than he left behind him here? and that by the puniſhments in- " flicted upon him for what he had done to his mother-in-law, " his wives, his brother and children, he is precipitated headlong " into the abodes of the wicked? If theſe things are falſe, as all " men underſtand them to be, what has death taken from him " but a ſenſe of pain (*i*)?" I do not think there can be a more expreſs declaration againſt future puniſhments. And certainly, if ſuch monſters of wickedneſs, as Oppianicus is repreſented to have been, ſuffer no puniſhment in another world, no man has reaſon to fear them.

Seneca has a very ſtrong paſſage to the ſame purpoſe, in which, after abſolutely rejecting the ſtories of future torments, as fables and idle terrors invented by the poets, he aſſerts, that " the dead " man is affected with no evils."—" Nullis defunctum malis af- " fici:"—that " death is the end and a releaſe from all our pains " and ſorrows, beyond which our evils do not extend: and that it " replaceth us in the ſame ſtate of tranquility we were in before

(*i*) " Nam nunc quidem quid tandem mali illi mors attulit? Niſi forte ineptiis " ac fabulis ducimur, ut exiſtimemus illum apud inferos impiorum ſupplicia per- " ferre, ac plures illic offèndiſſe inimicos quàm hic reliquiſſet? A ſocrus, ab " uxorum, à fratris et liberorum pœnis actum eſſe præcipitem in impiorum ſedem " atque regionem: quæ ſi falſa ſint, id quod omnes intelligunt, quid ei tandem " aliud mors eripuit, præter ſenſum doloris?" Orat. pro A. Cluentio, cap. 61.

" we

" we were born (*k*)." The obſervation I made on Cicero holds equally with reſpect to Seneca. If he had contented himſelf with merely rejecting and ridiculing the poetical fables, he might have been excuſed: but it is evident that both theſe philoſophers rejected the very ſubſtance of the doctrine itſelf, and allowed no future puniſhments at all. The ſame may be ſaid concerning Epictetus and the Stoics in general: as to which I refer the reader to what is obſerved here above, p. 165, 166. et p. 327, 328.

Plutarch (as was obſerved before) in his treatiſe De ſerâ numinis vindictâ, argues for the immortality of the ſoul, and ſeems to aſſert the juſtice of God, and future rewards and puniſhments; yet in that very treatiſe he gives it as his own opinion, that the wicked need no other puniſhments, but their own bad lives and actions. " I am of opinion (ſaith he) if it be lawful to ſay ſo, " that wicked men need neither the gods nor men to puniſh them: " but their own life, being wholly corrupted and full of pertur- " bation, is a ſufficient puniſhment (*l*)." And in his treatiſe to ſhew that it is not poſſible to live pleaſurably according to the tenets of Epicurus, he calls the fear of puniſhment after death ſuperſtition; and afterwards he calls it τὸ παιδικὸν ἐκεῖνο δέος, " that childiſh fear;" and repreſents what was ſaid of them as " fabulous ſtories, and the tales of mothers and nurſes (*m*)."

(*k*) " Mors omnium dolorum et ſolutio eſt et finis: ultra quam malâ noſtra " non exeunt: quæ nos in illam tranquillitatem, in quâ antequàm naſceremur ja- " cuimus, reponit." In Conſol. ad Marciam, cap. 19.

(*l*) Plutarch. Opera, tom. II. p. 566. D. edit. Xyl.

(*m*) Ibid. p. 1104. B, C. 1105. B.

In

In his celebrated tract of ſuperſtition, he expreſſes himſelf as if he looked upon all fear of God, at leaſt conſidered as a puniſher, to be ſuperſtition: and that the man that feareth God, who is every-where preſent, and whom nothing can eſcape, muſt be miſerable. He blames thoſe who look upon the evils and calamities which befal them, as divine puniſhments inflicted upon them for their ſins (*n*). But eſpecially he cenſures thoſe who have a dread of future puniſhments and torments after death, and condemns all fear of that kind as groundleſs, and the effect of a fooliſh ſuperſtition, without making any diſtinction, or giving the leaſt hint that there are puniſhments prepared for wicked men in a future ſtate. He finds fault with ſuperſtition for not looking upon death to be the end of life, but extending its fears beyond it, and for connecting with death the imagination of immortal evils. Συνάπτων τῷ θανάτῳ κάκων ἐπίνοιαν ἀθανάτων (*o*). I would obſerve by the way, that this treatiſe of Plutarch, which is written in a very elegant and artful manner, and has been very much admired, and often quoted by our modern ſceptical writers, and oppoſers of Revelation, has been very well anſwered, and the falſe reaſoning and ſophiſtry of it expoſed by the learned biſhop of

(*n*) Thoſe no doubt are in the wrong, who interpret all the misfortunes of human life, which befal themſelves or others, as divine judgments. But that in many caſes it is highly juſt and proper to regard the afflictions and calamities which happen to us, as ſent by God to correct and puniſh us for our ſins, is not only the doctrine of the Holy Scriptures, but perfectly agreeable to the dictates of ſound reaſon, on ſuppoſition there is a God and a Providence; and if really believed, muſt have a good effect on the religious and moral conduct. And that Plutarch had a notion of Divine Juſtice purſuing and puniſhing men for their ſins, appears from his excellent tract De ſera numinis vindicta.

(*o*) Plutarch. Opera, tom. II. p. 166. F.

Glouceſter,

Glouceſter, in the laſt edition of his Divine Legation of Moſes demonſtrated (*p*).

There is another conſideration of great moment, which has been ſtrongly urged by the laſt-mentioned celebrated author, to prove that the philoſophers did not believe future puniſhments. It is drawn from a remarkable paſſage of Cicero, in which he repreſents it as the opinion of all the philoſophers, not only of thoſe who denied a Providence, but of thoſe who acknowledged it, that God is never angry, nor hurts any perſon. Some learned men, who are unwilling to admit the conſequence which ſeems naturally to follow from it, are of opinion, that it is capable of a favourable interpretation; and that it is only deſigned to ſignify, that the Deity has no anger or paſſion like that which is in us, nor is ever carried by it to do hurt to his creatures. But Cicero ſeems to carry it much farther, ſo as not only to exclude all perturbation from the divine mind, but all punitive juſtice. His manner of introducing it is remarkable. He is ſpeaking of Regulus's ſtrict regard to the oath he had taken, even though he thereby expoſed himſelf to the ſevereſt torments and death. And then he ſuppoſes an objection made, that Regulus acted a fooliſh part, ſince if he had violated his oath he had nothing to fear from Jupiter. "For "it is a principle univerſally held by all the philoſophers, both "thoſe who ſay that God never meddleth with the affairs of men, "and thoſe who think he is always active and concerning himſelf "about us, that God is never angry, nor hurteth any one." He

(*p*) Vol. II. book iii. ſect. 6. p. 257, et ſeq.

anſwers,

anſwers, " That in an oath its binding force is to be conſidered: " for an oath is a religious affirmation; and what a man pro- " miſes, as it were calling God to witneſs, ought to be kept; " not out of fear of the anger of the gods, for there is no ſuch " thing, but out of a regard to juſtice and fidelity (*q*)." There is another paſſage of Cicero, in the ſecond book of his Offices, which it is proper to mention on this occaſion. Having propoſed to treat of thoſe things which may be moſt beneficial or hurtful to men, he obſerves it as a thing generally believed, that to hurt men is incompatible with the divine nature: and ſeems to give this as a reaſon for taking no particular notice of the gods in that place (*r*). This may be compared with a remarkable paſſage of Seneca, which I mentioned before, but which ought not to be omitted here. Having obſerved that the gods are carried to do good by the goodneſs of their own nature, he adds, That " they " neither will nor can hurt any one: they can neither ſuffer an " injury nor do it; for whatſoever is capable of doing hurt, is " capable alſo of receiving it. That ſupreme and moſt excellent " nature, of which they are partakers, both exempts them from

(*q*) " Quid eſt igitur, dixerit aliquis, in jurejurando? Num iratum timemus " Jovem? At hoc quidem commune eſt omnium philoſophorum; non eorum " modò qui Deum nihil habere ipſum negotii dicunt, nihil exhibere alteri, ſed " eorum etiam qui Deum ſemper agere aliquid et moliri volunt, nunquam nec " iraſci Deum, nec noſcere. Hæc quidem ratio, non magis contra Regulum quàm " contra omne jusjurandum valet. Sed in jurejurando non qui metus, ſed quæ " vis ſit debet intelligi: eſt enim jusjurandum affirmatio religioſa. Quod autèm " affirmatè quaſi Deo teſte promiſeris, id tenendum eſt: jam enim non ad iram " deorum quæ nulla eſt, ſed ad juſtitiam et fidem pertinet." De Offic. lib. iii. cap. 28, 29.

(*r*) De Offic. lib. ii. cap. 2.

" dangers

" dangers themſelves, and renders them not dangerous to " others (*s*)." Where he ſeems to affirm, that no hurt or danger is ever to be apprehended from the gods, as being contrary to their nature. Marcus Antoninus, ſpeaking of the intelligence which governs the univerſe, ſaith, that no one is hurt by it (*t*). And he argues, that " if there be gods, then leaving the world is " no ſuch dreadful thing, for you may be ſure they will do you " no hurt." Upon which Dacier remarks, that " the Stoics be- " lieved there was nothing to fear after death, becauſe it was con- " trary to the nature of God to do ill to any one (*u*)."

It muſt be acknowledged, that there is no ſmall difficulty in theſe and other paſſages of the like kind, which occur in the writings of the antients. If they are to be taken in the ſtricteſt ſenſe, we muſt ſuppoſe them to have held, that no puniſhment was to be apprehended from God either here or hereafter: and this would in its conſequences deſtroy a Providence, which yet there is good reaſon to think Cicero, as well as ſeveral others of the philoſophers, and particularly the Stoics, believed. In the paſſage above cited from him, he ſuppoſes God to be a witneſs of the oath, and yet not to be an avenger of the perjury, or angry at it;

(*s*) " Quæ cauſa eſt diis benefaciendi? Natura. Errat ſiquis putat eos nocere " velle. Non poſſunt. Nec accipere injuriam queunt, nec facere. Lædere enim " lædique conjunctum eſt. Summa illa et pulcherrima omnium natura, quos pe- " culo exemit, ne periculoſos quidem facit." Sen. epiſt. 95. See alſo Sen. De Irâ, lib. ii. cap. 27. quoted above, p. 167.

(*t*) Anton. Med. book vi. ſect. 1.

(*u*) See Divine Legation of Moſes, Vol. II. p. 186. marg. note, 5th. edit.

which is certainly a moſt inconſiſtent ſcheme, leſs defenſible than that of Epicurus, who ſuppoſed the gods were far removed from our world, and knew nothing of our affairs, nor ever gave themſelves the leaſt concern about them. A very learned and ingenious writer has endeavoured to account for this, by ſuppoſing that when Cicero repreſents it as the univerſal doctrine of the philoſophers, that God is never angry, nor hurts any one, it is to be underſtood of the higheſt God, who, they ſuppoſed, did not concern himſelf immediately with mankind, but committed the ſeveral regions of the univerſe to the vicegerency and government of inferior deities: and that theſe have paſſions and affections, and by them alone, according to their opinion, a particular providence is adminiſtred (*x*). But this, I am afraid, will not ſolve the difficulty. For in that very paſſage Cicero ſpeaks not merely of God, but of the gods, "Ira deorum nulla eſt,"—"The gods have no "anger." And it is of the gods that Seneca ſays, in the paſſage I have quoted from him, that they neither will nor can hurt any one, nor is any danger to be apprehended from them. And this he, as well as Cicero, ſuppoſes to be inſeparable from the divine nature, of which they are all partakers. Beſides, if the inferior gods, to whom the adminiſtration of things relating to mankind was committed, were ſuppoſed to be angry, and to be avengers of the perjury, it would deſtroy the force of Cicero's argument as here managed: ſince on this ſuppoſition the fear of their anger or of puniſhment from them, might be ſuppoſed to have had an influence to deter Regulus from violating his oath, which Cicero

(*x*) Divine Legation of Moſes, Vol. II. p. 194.

will

will not allow (*y*). For it is to be obſerved, that he here all along goes upon the Stoical ſcheme, that virtue and fidelity is to be preſerved for its own ſake, without regard to any reward or puniſhment, but what flows from the nature of the actions themſelves.

What increaſes the difficulty with regard to that paſſage of Cicero, is, that he repreſents that maxim that God or the gods are never angry, nor do hurt to any one, as common to all the philoſophers, both to the Epicureans who denied a Providence, and to thoſe who owned it. And every one knows, that Epicurus intended by it to free men from all fear of puniſhment from the gods; and when Cicero joins the other philoſophers with the Epicureans, as all agreeing that there is no anger in the gods, it looks as if the one as well as the other maintained, that no puniſhment is to be feared or apprehended from them. And yet I can hardly bring myſelf to think, that thoſe philoſophers who really believed a Providence, intended by that maxim to ſignify, that the gods had no diſpleaſure againſt ſin and wickedneſs, nor ever chaſtiſed men on the account of it. Seneca himſelf, in his 95th epiſtle, ſoon after the words above produced from him, ſaith, " The

(*y*) In the courſe of the argument, Cicero takes it for granted, that Jupiter himſelf, if he had been angry, and had puniſhed Regulus for violating his oath, could not have inflicted a greater puniſhment upon him, than he brought upon himſelf by keeping his oath, and returning to the Carthaginians, who put him to a cruel death. This ſeems to ſuppoſe, that it is not in the power of God himſelf to inflict a greater puniſhment upon men than they can inflict upon one another: and that temporal and bodily death is the worſt any man has to fear from God. This puts his diſpleaſure upon an equal footing with that of an earthly prince; and is very different from the doctrine taught by our Saviour, Luke xii. 4, 5.

" gods neither cauſe evil, nor ſuffer evil: yet they chaſtiſe ſome " perſons, and reſtrain them, and lay penalties upon them, and " ſometimes puniſh them in a way that looks like doing them " hurt."—" Hi nec dant malum, nec habent: cæterùm caſtigant " quoſdam et coercent, et irrogant pœnas, et aliquando ſpecie " mali puniunt." Where he repreſents the gods as laying chaſtiſements and coercions upon men, and as ſometimes inflicting puniſhments upon them, which have the appearance of evil. Stobæus gives it as the doctrine of the Stoics, that " ſince the " gods love virtue and its works, and have an averſion to vice " and the things which are wrought by it, and ſin is the work " or effect of vice, it is manifeſt that all ſin is diſpleaſing to the " gods, and is an impiety."—Κατεφαίνετο πᾶν ἁμάρτημα ἀπάρεστον θεοῖς ὑπαρχον, τοῦτο δε ἔστιν ἀσέβημα. It is added, that " a " bad man in every ſin he commits does ſomething diſpleaſing to " the gods."—Ἀπάρεστόν τι ποιεῖ θεοῖς. And yet they ſeem to allow no proper puniſhments of evil actions from the gods, but what flow from the nature of the evil actions themſelves (*z*).

There is a paſſage in Plato's Philebus, in which he repreſents the gods as incapable either of rejoicing or the contrary, ὅτε χαίρειν θεὸς ὅτε τὸ ἐναντιον (*a*). And yet, in his tenth republic, he repreſents the good or juſt man as beloved, and the wicked or unjuſt man as hated by God or the gods; which ſurely argues his being pleaſed or taking a complacency in the one, and having

(*z*) Stob. Eclog. Ethic. lib. ii p. 182. edit. Plantin.

(*a*) Platon. Opera, p. 81.

a juſt

a juſt diſpleaſure againſt the other (*b*). And indeed, to ſay he hateth the wicked, ſeems to be a ſtronger expreſſion than to ſay he is angry at him. The ſame eminent philoſopher mentions it with approbation as an antient tradition, that " juſtice always ac- " companies the Deity, and is a puniſher of thoſe that tranſgreſs " the divine law (*c*)." This paſſage is cited by Plutarch, who ſeems to approve it (*d*). And in his treatiſe De ſerâ numinis vindictâ, he calls God the author or maker of juſtice, δικης δημιουργον, and ſaith, that to him it belongs to determine when, and in what manner, and to what degree, to puniſh every one of the wicked (*e*).

The people in general had a notion of the divine juſtice in puniſhing offenders, and of avenging deities. And in this the poets generally expreſſed themſelves agreeably to the popular ſentiments. And as a ſenſe of guilt is apt naturally to create great uneaſineſs and anxious fears, this gave occaſion, in the ſtate of darkneſs and ignorance they were in, to much ſuperſtition, and many expedients for averting the diſpleaſure of the gods The Epicureans pretended an effectual remedy againſt all this, by denying a Providence, or that the gods take any notice of men or their actions. The other philoſophers, who acknowledged a Providence, though they could not deny that vice and wickedneſs was diſpleaſing to

(*b*) Platon. Opera, p. 521.

(*c*) Ibid. p. 600. G. See the paſſage cited above, p. 403, 404.

(*d*) Plutarch. Amator. Opera, tom. II. p. 1124. edit. Xyl.

(*e*) Ibid. p. 550. A.

the

the Deity, yet endeavoured to make themselves and others easy, by making such representations of the Divine Goodness as were not well consistent with rectoral justice. And they carried their notions of God's being never angry, and of his being by nature incapable of doing hurt, so far as in a great measure to take away the fear of punishment. Or if they allowed that God or the gods sometimes inflict punishments upon men in this present state, yet they seem generally to have rejected those of the life to come. It is true, that they could not help acknowledging that it was useful to society that the people should believe them; and accordingly they frequently expressed themselves in a popular way, as if they thought it reasonable to admit, that there are punishments prepared for bad men after death, but at other times they plainly discarded them, and represented all fears of that kind as the effects of superstition; and this, as shall be shewn in the next chapter, came at length to have a very bad effect upon the people themselves. There was therefore great need of a Divine Revelation, to awaken in men a sense of the Divine Justice, and of the dreadful consequences of a life of sin and disobedience. The great usefulness and excellency of the Gospel Revelation appears in this, that not only the future happiness of the righteous is placed in the most glorious light, but the wrath of God is there revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men.

CHAP.

CHAP. VIII.

The generality of the people, eſpecially in the politer nations of Greece and Rome, had fallen in a great meaſure from the belief of a future ſtate before the time of our Saviour's appearing. This is particularly ſhewn concerning the Greeks, by the teſtimonies of Socrates and Polybius. The ſame thing appears with regard to the Romans. Future puniſhments were diſregarded and ridiculed even among the vulgar, who in this fell from the religion of their anceſtors. The reſurrection of the body rejected by the philoſophers of Greece and Rome.

WE have pretty largely conſidered the ſentiments of the philoſophers with regard to the immortality of the ſoul and a future ſtate. And it appears that inſtead of confirming and eſtabliſhing the antient traditions concerning it, which had ſpread very generally among the nations, they greatly weakened and corrupted it. In this as well as other inſtances, whilſt they pretended to an extraordinary penetration above the vulgar, they helped to lead them aſtray, and ſubverted ſome of the moſt important principles, which lie at the foundation of all religion. Many of them abſolutely and avowedly rejected the doctrine of the immortality of the ſoul, and a future ſtate of rewards and puniſhments, and treated it with contempt and ridicule. Others talked very waveringly and uncertainly about it. This had a bad influence upon the people, eſpecially in Greece, where they affected

ſected to be admirers of wiſdom, and to be thought to excel the reſt of mankind in knowledge.

What the ſentiments of the Athenians were upon this ſubject, even ſo early as the time of Socrates, plainly appears from ſeveral paſſages of Plato's Phædo. One of Socrates's diſciples, Cebes, tells him, that the doctrine he taught concerning the immortality of the ſoul and a future ſtate, " met with little credit among men." Πολλην ἀπιστιαν παρέχει ἀνθρώποις. That " moſt men ſeemed to " think that the ſoul was immediately diſſolved at death, and " that it vaniſhed and was diſſipated, like the wind or ſmoke, or " became nothing at all: and that it needed no ſmall perſuaſion " and faith to believe that the ſoul exiſts, and has ſome power " and intelligence after the man is dead (*f*)." Socrates himſelf had ſaid the ſame thing juſt before, that his doctrine was not believed by the generality. Τοῖς πολλοις παριστιαν παρέχει. Simmias, another of the dialogiſts in the Phædo, repreſents it as the opinion of many, that the ſoul is diſſipated when a man dies, and that this is the end of its exiſtence (*g*). And Socrates, ſpeaking of the ſoul's being blown away, and periſhing with the body, declares, that this was what was ſaid by moſt men, ὡς φάσιν οἱ πολλοι ἀνθρωποι (*h*).

From theſe teſtimonies it plainly appears, that the mortality of the ſoul was a doctrine which prevailed among the Athenians in

(*f*) Plato. Opera, p. 380. G, H. et p. 381. A. edit. Lugd.

(*g*) Ibid. p. 384. C.

(*h*) Ibid. p. 385. G.

the

the time of Socrates, who were looked upon as the moſt learned and polite of all the Grecians. This ſhews, that the repreſentations of a future ſtate made in the myſteries had no great effect among the Athenians, in preſerving or promoting the belief of a future ſtate, though there were no people who profeſſed a greater veneration for the myſteries than they did, in which they were generally initiated. And indeed thoſe repreſentations were little fitted to beget the ſolid belief of it in thoſe that attended upon them. A future ſtate was not taught there in grave and ſerious diſcourſes, ſo as to inſtruct the people to form proper notions concerning it, but by ſhows and repreſentations which might ſtrike the ſenſes, and make ſome preſent impreſſions on the imagination, but were not fitted to enlighten the underſtanding, and produce a real and laſting conviction in the mind. And there is no great reaſon to think, that the ſtate of things among the Athenians grew better afterwards, but rather the contrary. Since it was after the days of Socrates, that the Cyrenaics, Cynics, Stoics, aroſe and flouriſhed, and the wide extended ſect of the Epicureans, as well as the ſeveral kinds of Sceptics, all of whom either abſolutely denied a future ſtate, or repreſented it as utterly uncertain.

And as to thoſe of the people who believed a future ſtate, and ſome kind of happineſs reſerved for good men after death, they ſeem to have entertained no very encouraging notions of it, and to have had low and mean ideas of that future felicity. Though they repreſented the condition of good men after death in the

lower regions as preferable to that of the wicked, yet they looked upon it to be uncomfortable at beſt, and that the ſtate of thoſe who continued in life was much more deſirable. Thus in Homer's Odyſſes, Achilles (though he was one of the heroic ſouls) tells Ulyſſes, who met him in the ſhades below, that he had rather be a ruſtic on earth, ſerving a poor man for hire, and having but ſcanty fare, than to have a large empire over all the dead. There are other paſſages of Homer to the ſame purpoſe, which make a melancholy repreſentation of the ſtate of the dead in Hades, even thoſe of them that were in Elyſium: though he ſometimes repreſents it, as Virgil does afterwards, as a delectable region.

Plato in the beginning of his third Republic, takes notice of ſeveral of thoſe paſſages in Homer, in which the ſouls in Hades are repreſented as diſconſolate and lamenting their condition. And he finds fault with them on a political account, as tending to weaken mens courage, and make them afraid of death. But the authority of Homer, who was looked upon as a great divine, and in a manner inſpired, would go farther with the people than that of Plato, whoſe ſublime ſpeculations were comparatively little regarded. And he himſelf in his Cratylus, where he endeavours to give high and honourable thoughts of Pluto and Hades, yet repreſents it as greatly dreaded by the vulgar, who looked upon it as a diſmal and gloomy abode. So that thoſe among the people who believed a future ſtate, could not be properly ſaid to hope for it. It was rather to them an object of dread: and therefore

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St. Paul juſtly gives it as the character of the Heathens in general, that they were " without hope (*i*)."

There is a remarkable paſſage of Polybius, which ſhews that the belief of a future ſtate was in his time become very common and faſhionable, both among perſons of ſuperior rank, and among the lower kind of people. That ſage author blames the great men and magiſtrates as very much wanting in true policy, in that, whereas the antients had with great wiſdom propagated the belief of a future ſtate, and particularly of future puniſhments among the multitude, which could ſcarce be kept in order but by the terror of thoſe puniſhments; the men of that age inconſiderately and abſurdly rejected them, and thereby encouraged the people to deſpiſe thoſe terrors. And to this he attributes the great and general want of honeſty among the Greeks, and the little regard that was paid to an oath or to their truſt (*k*). The learned biſhop of Glouceſter, who has quoted that paſſage at large, makes this juſt obſervation upon it, that Polybius aſcribes the approaching ruin of the Greeks, and their having fallen from their ancient virtue and glory to " a certain libertiniſm, which had ſpread amongſt " the people of condition, who piqued themſelves on a penetra- " tion ſuperior to their anceſtors and to the people, of regarding, " and prepoſterouſly teaching others to regard, the reſtraints of " religion as illuſory and unmanly (*l*)." And I cannot help ob-

(*i*) Eph. ii. 12. 1 Theſſ. iv. 13.

(*k*) Polyb. Hiſt. lib. vi. cap. 54, 55.

(*l*) Div. Leg. Vol. II. book iii. ſect. 1. p. 79, 80, 81. 4th edit.

ſerving that Polybius himſelf, who conſiders this matter merely as a politician, in that very paſſage where he blames the great men among the Greeks for encouraging the people to diſbelieve and deſpiſe future puniſhments, repreſents them as no better than uſeful fictions: and how could it be expected, that the people ſhould be much influenced by notions, which they had reaſon to think thoſe who propoſed them to their belief did not themſelves believe?

Polybius indeed, in the paſſage here referred to, praiſes the Romans for having acted in this matter much more wiſely than the Greeks, and ſhewing a greater regard to religion, which, he obſerves, had a good effect upon the morals of the people. And it is true, that in the antient and moſt virtuous times of the Roman republic, the doctrine of a future ſtate, and particularly of future puniſhments, ſeems to have been generally received and believed among the people. But afterwards this doctrine fell into diſcredit, and was deſpiſed in the more learned and civilized, but diſſolute ages of the Roman ſtate, when they became abandoned to vice and licentiouſneſs. In proportion as the Greek learning and philoſophy made a progreſs among the Romans, the antient traditionary belief of future rewards and puniſhments was rejected. How much the diſbelief of future retributions prevailed among the great men and gentlemen at Rome appears from what Cæſar ſaid in full ſenate in his ſpeech on occaſion of Catiline's conſpiracy, where he openly declares, that "to thoſe that live in "ſorrow and miſery, death is a repoſe from their calamities, not "a torment: that it puts an end to all the evils mortals are "ſubject

" ſubject to: and that beyond it there is no place left for anguiſh " or joy." " In luctu atque miſeriis mortem ærumnarum re- " quiem, non cruciatum eſſe; eam cuncta mortalium mala diſ- " ſolvere: ultra neque curæ neque gaudio locum eſſe (*m*)." Here he probably expreſſes the general ſentiments of the Roman gentlemen at that time, as well as his own; or elſe he would not have delivered himſelf thus on that occaſion, when it was his intereſt not to ſay any thing which might give offence to his hearers (*n*). Cato, in his celebrated ſpeech in anſwer to Cæſar, ſlightly paſſes over what he had ſaid againſt a future ſtate, with only inſinuating, that " Cæſar looked upon thoſe things to be fables, which " are related concerning the Inferi, where bad men, far from the " the manſions of the virtuous, are confined to dreary abodes, " abominable and full of horrors." " Cæſar bene et compoſitè " paulo ante in hoc ordine de vitâ et morte diſſeruit, credo, falſa " exiſtumans ea quæ de Inferis memorantur, diverſo itinere malos à bonis loca tetra, inculta, fœda, atque formidoloſa habere (*o*)."

(*m*) Apud Salluſt. Bel. Catilin. cap. 5.

(*n*) That this continued to be the prevailing opinion among the gentlemen of Rome, may be gathered from what Pliny the famous naturaliſt, who lived a conſiderable time after Cæſar, confidently pronounces. " All men are in the ſame con- " dition after their laſt day as before their firſt; nor have they any more ſenſe ei- " ther in body or ſoul after they are dead, than before they were born." " Om- " nibus à ſupremo die eadem quæ ante primum; nec magis à morte ſenſus ullus, " aut corporis aut animæ, quam ante natalem." And in what follows, he endeavours to expoſe the abſurdity of that opinion which attributes immortality to the ſoul: and ſays, " that theſe are childiſh and ſenſeleſs fictions of mortals, who " are ambitious of a never-ending exiſtence."—" Puerilium iſta deliramentorum, " avidæque nunquam deſinere mortalitatis commenta ſunt." Hiſt. Nat. lib. vii. cap. 55.

(*o*) Salluſt. ubi ſupra, cap. 52.

And

And Cicero in his fourth oration againſt Catiline, ſpoken on the ſame occaſion, ſays, " That in order to deter wicked men, the " antients would have it believed, that puniſhments were prepared " for the impious in the infernal regions, that they might be un- " der the influence of fear in this life, becauſe they were ſenſible, " that if theſe were taken away death itſelf was not to be dread- " ed." " Itaque ut aliqua in vitâ formido improbis eſſet poſita, " apud inferos ejuſmodi quædam illi antiqui ſupplicia impiis con- " ſtituta eſſe voluerunt: quod videlicet intelligebant, his remotis, " non eſſe mortem ipſam pertimeſcendam (*p*)." It is obſervable that both Cato and Cicero mention the doctrine of future puniſhments as held by the antients; but neither of them charge Cæſar with falſhood or with impiety in denying it: nor does either of them attempt to prove the truth of that doctrine, or offer any arguments to ſupport it. And indeed Cato, who was a rigid Stoic, if he followed the opinions of his ſect, could lay little ſtreſs on future puniſhments, which they generally diſcarded. And it appears from ſeveral paſſages before produced, that Cicero looked upon them to be vain and groundleſs terrors. What Cæſar ſaid in the ſenate, Cicero declared more fully in an aſſembly of the Roman people: which he would not have done, if he had not known that this was the opinion which generally prevailed among the people at that time (*q*).

It has been already obſerved, that in his firſt book of the Tuſculan Diſputations, where he argues for the immortality of the

(*p*) Orat. in Catilin. 4to. ſect. 4.

(*q*) See here above, p. 412.

ſoul, he repreſents the ſtories of future puniſhments as what ſcarce any body believed at Rome. To which may be added what he ſays in the perſon of Balbus in his ſecond book of the Nature of the Gods, " what old woman can be found ſo ſenſeleſs, as to be " afraid of the monſtrous things in the infernal regions, which " were antiently believed?" " Quæ anus tam excors inveniri po- " teſt, quæ illa, quæ quondam credebantur, apud inferos portenta " extimeſcat (*r*)?" Juvenal, who, like the other poets, generally ſpeaks agreeably to the popular ſentiments, ſays the ſame thing, and repreſents the antient accounts of the infernal regions as univerſally deſpiſed and diſbelieved even by the meaneſt of the people.

" Eſſe aliquos manes, et ſubterranea regna,
" Et contum, et Stygio ranas in gurgite nigras,
" Atque unâ tranſire vadum tot millia cymbâ
" Nec pueri credunt, niſi qui nondum ære lavantur (*s*)."

Sextus Empiricus indeed pretends that there was as general a conſent in believing the poetic fables of hell, as in believing the being of a God (*t*). But that famous ſceptic does not repreſent this matter fairly. He ſays it only with a view to weaken the argument for the exiſtence of a Deity drawn from the general conſent of nations concerning it. For the teſtimonies which have been produced plainly ſhew, that at the time when he writ, the ſtories about the Inferi met with very little credit in the world.

(*r*) De Nat. Deor. lib. ii cap. 2.

(*s*) Juven. Satyr. II. lin. 149. et ſeq.

(*t*) Adverſ. Phyſic. lib. viii. cap. 2.

I would

I would observe by the way, that the poetical representations of a future state, especially those relating to future punishments, were in effect the same that were made use of in the mysteries, and which, I have shewn, were then little regarded even among the people. It is true, that Celsus in a passage cited before, pretends that the doctrine of future punishments was equally taught among the Pagans as among the Christians, especially by those who were the interpreters of the sacred rites, and the mystagogues, who initiated persons into the mysteries, or presided in them. But then in what follows he supposes, that though both the mystagogues and the Christians taught future punishments, yet they differed in their accounts of them; and that the question was, which of their accounts were truest. Origen in his reflections on this passage observes, that it is reasonable to think, that they had the truth on their side, whose doctrine on this head had such an influence on their hearers, that they lived as if they were persuaded of the truth of it: that the Jews and Christians are mightily affected with the persuasion they have of the future rewards of good men, and punishments of the wicked. But, says he, "let Celsus, or any other man that pleases, shew any persons who have "been wrought upon by the terrors of the eternal punishments "as represented by the mystagogues:" where he intimates, that the mysteries had very little effect, and made small impressions on the minds of men (*u*). And he elsewhere observes, that Celsus thought, that the Christians only feigned the things they taught concerning a future state, to fill the vulgar with amazement, and

(*u*) Origen cont. Cels. lib. viii. p. 408, 409. edit. Spencer.

did

did not declare the truth; and compares them with thoſe who in the Bacchanalian myſteries produced τὰ φάσματα καὶ δείματα, ſpectres and terrible appearances; where Celſus ſeems plainly to intimate that the repreſentations made of theſe things in the myſteries were only fictions deſigned to frighten the people, and had no foundation in truth (*x*). To which Origen anſwers, whether what is ſaid concerning the Bacchanalian myſteries be credible or not, let the Greeks declare: the Chriſtians are only concerned to defend their own doctrines.

Strabo an author juſtly eſteemed, who flouriſhed under the reign of the emperor Auguſtus, ſaith of the Indian Brachmans, that they compoſed fables, like Plato, concerning the immortality of the ſoul, and the judgments of Hades; where he ſeems to pronounce all theſe things to be only fables and fictions (*y*). Plutarch, who lived ſome time after the coming of our Saviour, in his treatiſe which is deſigned to prove, That it is not poſſible to live pleaſurably according to the tenets of Epicurus, obſerves, that the vulgar, οἱ πολλοι, the moſt of mankind, were ready to admit, what he calls "the fabulous hope of immortality, but that they "had no fear of the puniſhments ſaid to be in Hades,"—ἄνευ φόβου περὶ τῶν ἐν ἅδου (*z*). And again he ſays, "there are not "many that fear theſe things:" and he treats them as fabulous

(*x*) Orig. contra Celſ. lib. iv. p. 167.

(*y*) Strab. lib. xv.

(*z*) Plutarch. Oper. tom. II. p. 1104. C. edit. Xyl.

relations, and the tales of mothers and nurſes (*a*). The ſame author in his tract De ſerâ Numinis vindictâ, having ſaid that during this life the ſoul is in a conflict, and when that is over receives according to its deſerts, adds " but what rewards or pu-" niſhments the ſoul being alone [i. e. ſeparated from the body] " receives for the things done in the paſt life, are nothing to " us who are alive, but are diſbelieved, and hid from us,"— οὐδὲν εἶναι πρὸς ἡμᾶς ζῶντας, ἀλλ' ἀπίστεῖται καὶ λανθάνουσιν. Where he ſhews that in his days the rewards and puniſhments of a future ſtate were little regarded or believed by the generality of the Heathens, and were looked upon as things that did not concern them. And the truth is, that in the Pagan theology, provided a man were diligent in obſerving the eſtabliſhed rites of worſhip towards the popular deities, he might paſs for a religious man, though he believed nothing at all of the world to come. But no ſooner did they embrace Chriſtianity, but it wrought in them the moſt firm and ſolid perſuaſion of a future ſtate of rewards and puniſhments, which neither their boaſted myſteries, nor the writings of their ableſt philoſophers, were able to effect before.

I have hitherto taken little notice of the writings of the poets. There are ſeveral paſſages in them, which proceed upon the ſuppoſition of the rewards and puniſhments of a future ſtate. And ſomething of this kind made a part of the poetical machinery; yet they expreſs themſelves on ſeveral occaſions, as if they thought death brought an utter extinction of being, and took away all

(*a*) Plutarch. Opera, tom. II. p. 1105. B. edit. Xyl.

ſenſe

ſenſe of evil. Plutarch, in his Conſolation to Apollonius, quotes this paſſage of an antient poet, that no grief or evil touches the dead,

Ἄλγος γὰρ ὄντως οὐδὲν ἅπτεται νεκρῶν.

He there alſo cites another paſſage from a poet, ſignifying that the dead man is in the ſame condition he was in before he was born (*b*). Stobæus aſcribes the firſt of theſe paſſages to Æſchylus. There are paſſages of the ſame kind in Epicharmus, in Sophocles, Euripides, and Aſtydamas, referred to by the learned Dr. Whitby, who all, ſays he, agree in this, that the dead are ſenſible of no grief or evil (*c*).

As to the Roman poets, I need not mention the famous Lucretius, who publiſhed a ſyſtem of Epicurianiſm, which he endeavoured to recommend to his countrymen, by all the charms of poetry, and particularly extolled his philoſophical hero for freeing men from the dread of puniſhments after death. And it is well known, that both the Greek and Roman poets draw arguments from this conſideration, that life is ſhort, and death ſhall put an utter end to our exiſtence; to urge men to lay hold on the preſent opportunity for giving a full indulgence to their appetites, according to that libertine maxim, "let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we "die." Several paſſages of this kind might be produced from

(*b*) Plutarch. Opera, p. 109. E.

(*c*) Whitby's Commentary on 2 Tim. i. 10.

Strato and others of the Greeks. To the ſame purpoſe is that noted paſſage of Catullus,

" Vivamus, mea Leſbia, atque amemus—
" Soles occidere et redire poſſunt:
" Nobis cum ſemel occidit brevis lux,
" Nox eſt perpetua una dormienda."

and Horace,

" Vitæ ſumma brevis ſpem nos vetat inchoare longam:
" Jam nox te premet fabulæque Manes."
Lib. I. Ode iv. 15.

See alſo lib. i. Ode 11. and other paſſages of the ſame kind. Perſius alſo repreſents it as the language of many in his time,

" Indulge genio: carpamus dulcia: noſtrum eſt
" Quod vivis: cinis et Manes et fabula fies."
Satyr. v. 151, 152.

I ſhall only add one paſſage more from Seneca the Tragedian,

" Poſt mortem nihil eſt, ipſaque mors nihil—
" Quæris quo jaceas poſt obitum loco,
" Quo non nata jacent."

I would conclude with obſerving, that as to the reſurrection of the body, neither the philoſophers nor the vulgar among the Greeks and Romans ſeem to have had any notion of it. When St. Paul in his excellent diſcourſe to the Athenians ſpoke of the re-

ſurrection of the dead, we are told his hearers mocked or treated it with contempt, as a ſtrange doctrine which they had never heard of before (*d*). The Epicureans and Stoics are particularly mentioned. But it was equally true of all the other ſects of philoſophers. Thoſe who argued moſt for the immortality of the ſoul, as the Pythagoreans and Platoniſts, held the doctrine of the reſurrection of the body in contempt. And this indeed flowed from the principles of their philoſophy. For they looked upon the body to be the priſon and ſepulchre of the ſoul, into which it was ſent down by way of puniſhment for ſins committed in a former ſtate: that the happineſs of the ſoul conſiſted in its being looſed and diſengaged from the body: and that a reſurrection of the body, or the ſoul being again united to it, if it were poſſible, was far from being a deſirable thing. Celſus calls it the hope of worms, a very filthy and abominable, as well as an impoſſible thing: and that it is what God neither can nor will do, as being baſe and contrary to nature (*e*). But it is to be obſerved, that the latter Platoniſts and Pythagoreans, after Chriſtianity appeared, ſuppoſed that purified ſouls after their departure from the body were inveſted with ſhining, agile, celeſtial bodies, pretty nearly anſwering St. Paul's deſcription of the riſen bodies of the ſaints, in the noble account he gives of the change which ſhall paſs upon them at the reſurrection. And it is very probable, that, in this as well as other inſtances, they improved their notions from the Goſpel diſcoveries, though being no friends to Chriſtianity, they were

(*d*) Acts xvii. 18. 20. 32.

(*e*) Orig. cont. Celſ. lib. v. p. 240.

unwilling

unwilling to acknowledge the obligation. See Dr. Whitby, in his Annotations on 1 Cor. xv. 44.

It is ſaid, indeed, that there was ſome notion of the reſurrection of the body among the antient Perſians. And ſome think that to this Diogenes Laertius has a reference, when he gives it as a part of the doctrine of the antient Magi, ἀναβιώσεσθαι τὺς ἀνθρώπους, καὶ ἔσεσθαι ἀθανάτους. —"That men ſhall live again, and be im-" mortal (*f*)." And it is not improbable, that ſome notion of the reſurrection of the body might have been part of the original tradition, derived along with the notion of the immortality of the ſoul from the firſt ages. That it obtained among the Jews a conſiderable time before the coming of our Saviour, appears from the account given us of Eleazar, and of the mother and her ſeven ſons, who were put to the moſt cruel torments for their religion under the perſecution of Antiochus Epiphanes, and who comforted themſelves with the hopes that God would raiſe them from the dead (*g*). And to this the ſacred writer of the epiſtle to the Hebrews probably refers, when he ſpeaks of the good men in former times, who "were tortured, not accepting deliverance, that they " might obtain a better reſurrection (*h*)." From ſeveral paſſages in the New Teſtament it is evident, that this was a doctrine generally received among the Jews, at the time of the firſt publiſhing of the Goſpel, except by the Sadducees, who for that reaſon

(*f*) Laert. in Proœm. ſegm. 9.

(*g*) 2 Maccab. chap. vi and vii.

(*h*) Heb. xi. 35.

had

had an ill character among the people. But the notions the Jews generally entertained of the reſurrection ſeem to have been very groſs, as is manifeſt from the objection of the Sadducees againſt it, and which they were at a loſs how to anſwer, till our Saviour taught them to form more juſt and ſublime notions concerning it.

If therefore we ſuppoſe ſome notion of the reſurrection of the body to have been communicated to mankind in the firſt ages, it became ſoon corrupted and obſcured. And ſome learned perſons have ſuppoſed, that the doctrine of the tranſmigration of ſouls, which became very general, was a corruption and depravation of that doctrine, and at length greatly contributed to deſtroy the true notion of it.

Perhaps alſo it was owing to a corruption of the doctrine of the reſurrection of the body, that in many parts of the world, where they held a life after this, the notion they had of it ſeems to have been this, that it ſhall be a life perfectly like the preſent, with the ſame bodily wants, the ſame exerciſes and employments, and the ſame enjoyments and pleaſures, which they had here. Hence it was that among ſome nations it was cuſtomary for the women, the ſlaves, the ſubjects or friends of the deceaſed, to kill themſelves, that in the other world they might ſerve thoſe whom they loved and reſpected in this. Such was the practice among the antient Danes, as Bartholinus informs us, in his Daniſh Antiquities. Thus alſo it ſtill is in Japan, Macaſſar, and other places. It is ſaid to be a cuſtom in Guinea, that when a king dies

dies many are ſlain, and their bloody carcaſes buried with him, that they may again live with him in the other world (*i*). It was formerly a well known cuſtom in the Eaſt Indies for women to kill themſelves after the death of their huſbands, that they might accompany them in the next life. And ſo lately as in the year 1710, when the prince of Morava on the coaſt of Coromandel died, aged above eighty years, his wives, to the number of forty-ſeven, were buried with his corpſe (*k*). We are told alſo, that in Terra Firma in America, when any of their caſiques dies, his chief ſervants, men and women, kill themſelves to ſerve them in the other world, and they bury with them maiz and other proviſions for their ſubſiſtence (*l*). And it is ſaid concerning the diſciples of Foe in China, that ſome of them, when they meet with obſtacles to their paſſions, go together to hang or drown themſelves, that when they riſe together again, they may become huſband and wife (*m*).

Monſ. de Monteſquieu, who mentions ſome of theſe things, is of opinion, that this flows not ſo much from a belief of the immortality of the ſoul, as of the reſurrection of the body: from whence they drew this conſequence, that upon their death men

(*i*) Engliſh acquiſitions in Guinea, p. 22.

(*k*) There is a particular account of this in a letter from F. Martin to F. de Villette, who were both of them miſſionaries in that country. Concerning which, ſee Millar's Hiſtory of the Propagation of Chriſtianity, Vol. II. p. 154, 155.

(*l*) Perrier's Collection of Voyages, p. 194.

(*m*) See a tract of a Chineſe philoſopher in Du Halde's Hiſtory of China, Vol. III. p. 272. Engliſh tranſlation.

would

would have the ſame ſentiments, neceſſities, and paſſions as now. I do not deny but this might have been occaſioned by an abuſe or miſunderſtanding of the doctrine of the reſurrection of the body. But it does not neceſſarily follow, that they believed the ſame body that died would riſe again, though probably they thought the ſoul would have bodies of the like kind, or corporeal vehicles, which would have the ſame wants, neceſſities, and enjoyments, as they have at preſent. But the remark which that celebrated author makes upon the whole is very judicious. " That it is not " ſufficient that religion ſhould eſtabliſh the doctrine of a future " ſtate, but it ſhould alſo direct to a proper uſe of it: and that " this is admirably done by the Chriſtian religion. The doctrine " of a future ſtate is there repreſented as the object of faith, and " not of ſenſe or knowledge: and even the reſurrection of the " body, as there taught, leads to ſpiritual ideas (*n*)." How admirably our Saviour and his apoſtles, who writ under the direction of his Spirit, have provided againſt the abuſe of the doctrine of the reſurrection, and what noble ideas they have given of it, will be evident to any one that impartially conſiders what is ſaid of it by our bleſſed Lord, Luke xx. 35, 36. and by St. Paul, 1 Cor. xv. from the 42d verſe to the end; and 1 Theſſ. iv. 13—18.

(*n*) L'Eſprit de Loix, Vol. II, livre xxiv. chap. 19. p. 167. edit. Edinb

CHAP. IX.

Our Lord Jesus Christ brought life and immortality into the most clear and open light by the Gospel. He both gave the fullest assurance of that everlasting happiness which is prepared for good men in a future state, and made the most inviting discoveries of the nature and greatness of that happiness. The Gospel also contains express declarations concerning the Punishment which shall be inflicted upon the wicked in a future state. The necessity and importance of this part of the Gospel Revelation shewn. The conclusion, with some general reflections upon the whole.

FROM the account which hath been given of the state of the Heathen world, with respect to the belief of a state of future rewards and punishments, it appears, that some notion of this obtained among the nations from the remotest antiquity: that the most eminent Pagan writers represent it as a tradition, which obtained long before the ages of learning and philosophy, and which was regarded as of divine original: that in process of time this tradition became greatly corrupted, and was mixed with fables and fictions by the poets and mythologists, and by the legislators and civil magistrates too, with a view to adapt it to the gross imaginations of the people, and to serve political purposes, and the interests of society and government: that afterwards, when the philosophers arose, who pretended to an extraordinary penetration above the vulgar, and to examine every thing by the rules

rules of ſtrict reaſoning, they in this as well as other inſtances corrupted the antient traditions, and for the moſt part rejected the immortality of the ſoul, and a future ſtate of rewards and punithments: that thoſe of them who profeſſed to believe it, the chief of whom were the Pythagoreans and Platoniſts, generally placed it on wrong foundations, and argued for it from principles which were either falſe or not to be depended upon: that thoſe who ſometimes expreſſed themſelves ſtrongly in favour of the ſoul and a future ſtate, at other times ſaid things which ſeem to be inconſiſtent with that belief: or, if they really believed it, they did not pretend to a certainty, and frequently ſpoke of it in a way which ſhewed they had not attained to a ſatisfying conviction concerning it: that their doctrine of future rewards was ſo managed as to yield little comfort and encouragement to the generality of good and virtuous perſons; and if they ſometimes ſaid high things of that future happineſs, it related chiefly to ſome eminent and privileged ſouls, ſuch as legiſlators, heroes, and philoſophers, and thoſe who diſtinguiſhed themſelves by public ſervices, and by their bravery in war: that as to future puniſhments, though they were ſenſible that it was uſeful to ſociety to have them believed, yet they generally rejected them, and advanced ſuch notions of the Divine Goodneſs, as left little room for puniſhments in a future ſtate; and they frequently treated all fears of any evil after death as the effects of a vain and fooliſh ſuperſtition.

This account of the ſentiments of the antient philoſophers, eſpecially thoſe of Greece and Rome, with regard to a future ſtate, is far from coming up to the high idea many have conceived

of them; but that it is not a wrong charge, has, I think, been ſufficiently ſhewn in the foregoing part of this treatiſe. And though ſome remains of the antient traditions concerning a future ſtate of retributions were ſtill to be found among the people, yet they were in a great meaſure worn away, and had loſt their force and influence, even among the vulgar Pagans, about the time when the Goſpel was publiſhed to the world.

As to the Jews, we have the teſtimony of our bleſſed Lord himſelf, and of the ſacred writer of the epiſtle to the Hebrews, that the doctrine of a future ſtate was an article of the religion of the antient patriarchs, the anceſtors of their nation (*o*). And though there is no expreſs mention of a future happineſs among the promiſes of the law of Moſes, taken in the literal ſenſe, yet that the belief of a future ſtate obtained among that people, appears to me for ſeveral reaſons highly probable; but their notions of it ſeem to have been mixed with much obſcurity. There was a conſiderable ſect among them at the time of our Saviour's coming, viz. the Sadducees, who profeſſed a ſtrict adherence to the law of Moſes, and yet denied a future ſtate. And though the body of the Jewiſh nation believed, they entertained very imperfect and groſs notions of that future felicity, and particularly of the reſurrection of the body.

In theſe circumſtances it pleaſed God in his great wiſdom and goodneſs to grant a new Revelation of his will to mankind, in

(*o*) Matt. xxii. 29. 31, 32. Heb. xi. 9, 10. 13. 15, 16.

which

which as he made the cleareſt diſcoveries of his own glorious perfections and governing providence, to lead men to the right knowledge and adoration of him the only true God, and gave them the moſt holy and excellent precepts to guide them in the practice of univerſal righteouſneſs and virtue; ſo the more effectually to animate them to their duty, he hath given them the moſt expreſs and certain aſſurances of eternal life, as the reward of their ſincere and perſevering, though not abſolutely perfect, obedience. We are not left merely to collect it by deductions and inferences, which, however juſt, are apt to leave the mind in doubt and uncertainty, but it is clearly and directly revealed in the moſt plain and explicit terms poſſible, and which admit of no ambiguity or evaſion. I need not inſiſt upon the proof of this to any that have the leaſt acquaintance with the New Teſtament. It is well known that theſe ſacred writings every where abound with the moſt ſtrong and poſitive declarations concerning a future everlaſting glory and bleſſedneſs prepared for the good and righteous. And accordingly one chief deſign of the Goſpel Revelation is to teach men to riſe in their thoughts, affections, and views, above this vain and tranſitory world, to that future heavenly ſtate, to fit and prepare them for it, and to engage them to act as the heirs and expectants of a bleſſed immortality. This is the proper characteriſtic and diſtinguiſhing glory of the religion of Jeſus. We have now as much certainty of that eternal life, as we can reaſonably expect, till we ourſelves are ſo happy as to be admitted to the actual poſſeſſion and enjoyment of it. For we are aſſured of it by the expreſs word and promiſe of God himſelf, brought to us by the moſt credible and illuſtrious meſſenger that could be ſent from heaven

to

to mankind, " even the Only-begotten of the Father, full of " grace and truth," who came " from his boſom to declare him " to us," and who is juſtly called the " Amen, the faithful and " true Witneſs (*p*)." All the atteſtations which were given to his divine miſſion, which were as great as could reaſonably be expected or deſired (*q*), may alſo be regarded as divine atteſtations to the truth of the doctrine he taught in his heavenly Father's name, and eſpecially of that doctrine of eternal life, which was the main ſcope and ultimate deſign of the revelations he brought. His teſtimony therefore concerning it is the teſtimony of God himſelf. " I have not ſpoken of myſelf (ſaith he) but the Father " which hath ſent me, he gave me commandment, what I ſhould " ſay, and what I ſhould ſpeak. And I know that his command- " ment is life everlaſting (*r*)."

But that which gave the moſt glorious atteſtation both to his divine miſſion in general, and particularly to the truth of the doctrine he taught concerning the reſurrection of the dead and eternal life, was his own riſing again from the dead, as he himſelf had promiſed and foretold. " He ſhewed himſelf alive after his paſ- " ſion," to his apoſtles and other unexceptionable witneſſes, by

(*p*) John i. 14. 18. Rev. iii. 14. And what adds a peculiar force to his teſtimony is, that he is not only the publiſher, but is conſtituted by the Divine Wiſdom and Grace, the Author and Giver of that eternal life to them that obey him; as having done and ſuffered all that was required of him, in order to our redemption and ſalvation. See Heb. v. 9. ix. John vi. x. xvii.

(*q*) See concerning this the firſt volume of this work, in the laſt chapter.

(*r*) John xii. 49.

" many

" many infallible proofs, being ſeen of them forty days, and " ſpeaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God (*s*)." And as a farther proof of his reſurrection and exaltation, he poured forth upon them, according to his promiſe, his holy ſpirit from on high, by which they were endued with extraordinary gifts and powers, and were enabled to preach the Goſpel among the nations, in the name of a crucified and riſen Saviour: " God bearing " them witneſs with ſigns and wonders, and divers miracles and " gifts of the Holy Ghoſt, according to his will (*t*)." And eternal life was a principal article of the Goſpel they preached: " This " is the record (ſaith St. John) that God hath given to us eternal " life: and this life is in his Son (*u*)."

As our Lord Jeſus Chriſt hath aſſured us of the certainty, ſo he hath alſo made far clearer and fuller diſcoveries of the nature and greatneſs of that future happineſs than the world was ever favoured with before.

It is not only repreſented to us as a ſtate of reſt, in which good men ſhall be abſolutely exempted from all the evils and ſorrows to which they are now obnoxious (*x*); but as including the full perfection of our nature, in the enjoyment of all that good which is neceſſary to our complete felicity. The " ſpirits of

(*s*) Acts i. 3.

(*t*) Heb. ii. 4.

(*u*) 1 John v. 11.

(*x*) Heb. iv. 9. Rev. xxi. 4.

" juſt

" juſt men ſhall then be made perfect (*y*)." They ſhall be enlightened with divine knowledge. We now " know in part (ſaith St. Paul) " but when that which is perfect is come, then that " which is in part ſhall be done away (*z*)." And he there repreſents our preſent higheſt attainments in knowledge, as no better in compariſon than the crude imperfect ideas of a child, compared with the knowledge of a man arrived to a full maturity of reaſon. But what is eſpecially to be conſidered is, that the ſouls of the righteous ſhall then be made perfect in holineſs, goodneſs, and purity, which is the higheſt glory and excellence of the reaſonable nature: and not only ſhall their ſouls be raiſed to a high degree of perfection in that future ſtate, but their bodies too. Man is in his original conſtitution an embodied ſpirit. Though the rational ſoul is the nobleſt part of our nature, yet it is not the whole of it. Nor could the whole man be properly ſaid to be made perfect in bliſs, if the body, which was from the beginning a conſtituent part of his frame, in which he lived and acted during his abode on earth, were left utterly to periſh in the grave. Eternal life, therefore, as it ſignifies the happineſs of our entire nature, takes in not merely the immortality of the ſoul, when ſeparated from the body, but the reſurrection of the body too, and the immortal exiſtence of the whole man, body and ſoul united, in a ſtate of felicity and perfection. And of this our Lord Jeſus Chriſt hath given us the fulleſt and moſt ſatisfying aſſurance.

(*y*) Heb. xii. 23.

(*z*) 1 Cor. xiii. 9, 10, 11.

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The Jews, as was before obſerved, at the time of our Saviour's coming, generally profeſſed to believe the reſurrection of the body: but their notions of it ſeem for the moſt part to have been very rude and groſs. Our Lord therefore takes occaſion to raiſe them to more juſt and ſublime conceptions of it. He declares, in anſwer to the objections of the Sadducees, That "the children of "this world marry, and are given in marriage, but they that "ſhall be accounted worthy to obtain that world, and the reſur-"rection of the dead, neither marry nor are given in marriage: "neither ſhall they die any more; for they are equal unto the "angels, and are the children of God, being the children of the "reſurrection (*a*)." And elſewhere, to ſignify the wonderful ſplendor with which their glorified bodies ſhall be arrayed, he ſaith, "The righteous ſhall ſhine forth as the ſun in the kingdom "of the Father (*b*)." In like manner St. Paul, ſpeaking of the difference between our bodies in this preſent ſtate, and what they ſhall be at the reſurrection of the dead, ſaith, That the body which was "ſown in corruption, ſhall be raiſed in incorruption; "it was ſown in diſhonour, it ſhall be raiſed in glory; it was "ſown in weakneſs, it ſhall be raiſed in power; it was ſown a na-"tural (or animal) body, it ſhall be raiſed a ſpiritual body (*c*)." And again, "This corruptible muſt put on incorruption, and this "mortal muſt put on immortality: ſo when this corruptible ſhall "have put on incorruption, and this mortal ſhall have put on

(*a*) Luke xx. 34, 35, 36.

(*b*) Matt. xiii. 43.

(*c*) 1 Cor. xv. 42, 43, 44.

" immortality, then ſhall be brought to paſs this ſaying that is " written, death is ſwallowed up in victory (*d*)." The ſame apoſtle afterwards aſſures us, That " Chriſt ſhall change our vile " body, that it may be faſhioned like unto his glorious body, " according to the working whereby he is able even to ſubdue " all things unto himſelf (*e*)."

To heighten our ideas of the felicity prepared for good men in the heavenly ſtate, the place of their reſidence is repreſented as very beautiful and glorious. It is deſcribed by metaphors drawn from thoſe things which are accounted moſt ſplendid and magnificent here on earth: but to ſhew that it is to be underſtood in a higher ſenſe, far tranſcending the glory of this world, it is declared, that that heavenly city " hath no need of the ſun, neither of the " moon to ſhine in it. For the glory of God doth enlighten it, " and the Lamb," by which we are to underſtand our glorified Redeemer, " is the light thereof (*f*)."

It is further ſignified, that as they ſhall be placed in delightful manſions, ſo they ſhall be engaged in the happieſt exerciſes and enjoyments, ſuch as ſhall be every way ſuited to their perfected natures. They ſhall be admitted to the bliſsful and improving ſociety of holy and glorious " angels, and the ſpirits of juſt men " made perfect," and ſhall make a part of the " general aſſembly

(*d*) 1 Cor. xv. 53, 54.

(*e*) Phil. iii. 21.

(*f*) Rev. xxi. 22, 23.

" and

" and church of the firſt-born, which are written in heaven (*g*)," all united in holy love and concord, continually giving and receiving mutual unſpeakable ſatisfaction and joy.

But the Goſpel raiſeth our ideas of the heavenly felicity higher ſtill, by aſſuring us that we ſhall then be admitted to the beatific viſion and fruition of God himſelf. " Bleſſed are the pure in " heart (ſaith our Saviour) for they ſhall ſee God (*h*)." Though we cannot pretend diſtinctly and fully to explain what is to be underſtood by this expreſſion of ſeeing God, yet this we may be ſure of, that it ſignifies that we ſhall then be admitted to a far clearer and more immediate knowledge and intuition of the divine glory and perfections, than we are capable of attaining to here on earth. " Now we ſee through a glaſs darkly (as St. Paul ſpeaks) " but then face to face: now I know in part, but " then ſhall I know even as alſo I am known (*i*)." It is ſuch a viſion as ſhall fill us with the higheſt ſatisfaction and delight, and ſhall have a transforming influence upon us. " We ſhall be like " him, for we ſhall ſee him as he is." We ſhall " behold his " face in righteouſneſs," ſo as to be " ſatisfied with his like- " neſs (*k*)."

It is alſo mentioned as a delightful ingredient in the heavenly felicity, that there we ſhall be with Chriſt the great Saviour and

(*g*) Heb. xii. 22, 23, 24.

(*h*) Matt. v. 8.

(*i*) 1 Cor. xiii. 12.

(*k*) 1 John iii. 2. Pſal. xvi. 11. xvii. 15.

Lover of our natures, who hath redeemed us unto God by his blood, out of every tribe, and tongue, and family, and nation, the Captain of our Salvation, appointed by the Divine Wiſdom and Goodneſs to bring many ſons unto glory. We ſhall rejoice in him and the wonders of his love, and ſhall with unſpeakable ſatisfaction behold his glory, and be ſharers in it (*l*).

And now, upon the whole, what a noble idea does the Goſpel give us of the happineſs prepared for good men in the heavenly ſtate! It appears from the account which is there given of it to be a ſtate of wonderful ſplendor and glory, of conſummate bliſs and joy, and of perfect purity and holineſs. And it deſerves particular notice, that though the manſions of the bleſſed in heaven are ſometimes deſcribed by images and repreſentations drawn from ſenſible and worldly objects, yet there is nothing which intrenches in the leaſt on the rules of the ſtricteſt purity. None of the impure delights of a Mahometan paradiſe, and which were artfully contrived to pleaſe thoſe who place their happineſs in ſenſual gratifications, enter into the deſcription of the Goſpel felicity. It is a happineſs prepared for the "pure in heart." It is "the inheritance of the ſaints in light," or "of them that are ſanctified (*m*)." We are told, that it is "unto them that by a patient continuance in well-doing ſeek for glory, honour, and immortality," that God will give "eternal life (*n*)." And that

(*l*) John xiv. 3. xvii. 24. Rev. iii. 21.

(*m*) Matt. v. 8. Col. i. 12. Acts xxvi. 18.

(*n*) Rom. ii. 7.

"without

without holineſs no man ſhall ſee the Lord (*o*)." And that into that heavenly Jeruſalem " there ſhall in no-wiſe enter any " thing that defileth, neither whatſoever worketh abomination, " or maketh a lie (*p*)." All the exerciſes, all the enjoyments, are pure and holy, and the bleſſed above are continually employed in praiſing and ſerving God, and in doing his will.

The laſt thing to be obſerved concerning that future happineſs is, that it ſhall be unchangeable, and of everlaſting duration. Hence it is ſo often deſcribed to us under the notion of eternal life. They that are admitted to that heavenly felicity, ſhall not be put upon any new hazards or ſtates of trial. They ſhall be raiſed for ever above all fear of change, or of loſing their happineſs, and ſhall be kept through the mighty power and goodneſs of God, who ſhall maintain and preſerve them in their holy and happy ſtate to all eternity.

This happineſs ſhall commence with regard to the ſouls of the righteous, in a lower degree, immediately upon their departure out of the body. This ſeems to be plainly intimated by our Saviour, when he ſaith concerning Lazarus, that " he died, " and was carried by angels into Abraham's boſom," a ſtate of reſt and joy (*q*). So he promiſed the penitent thief, that he ſhould " that day," i. e. the day of his death, " be with him in para-

(*o*) Heb. xii. 14.

(*p*) Rev. vii. 15. xxii. 3. compared with Pſal. ciii. 20, 21. Matt. vi. 10.

(*q*) Luke xvi. 22.

" diſe

" diſe (*r*)." And dying Stephen prayed to the Lord Jeſus " to " receive his ſpirit," i. e. to be with him in bliſs and glory (*s*). St. Paul ſaith concerning himſelf, " I deſire to depart, and to be " with Chriſt:" intimating the deſire and hope he had that he ſhould be with Chriſt, when he departed out of this preſent life (*t*). And to the ſame purpoſe, after having ſaid, that whilſt " we are at home in the body, we are abſent from the Lord," he declares in his own name, and that of all true Chriſtians, " we " are confident and willing rather to be abſent from the body and " preſent with the Lord (*u*)." Where it is intimated, that when the ſouls of good men are abſent from the body, and conſequently while they are in the ſeparate ſtate before their being reunited to their bodies at the reſurrection, they are " preſent with the Lord," preſent in ſuch a manner, that the neareſt communion with him they are admitted to here on earth, may be regarded as comparatively a ſtate of abſence from the Lord. Yet notwithſtanding this, it is not till the general reſurrection, that the happineſs of the righteous ſhall be completed. It is at the time of Chriſt's glorious appearing, that the dead ſhall be raiſed, and their entire natures conſummated in bliſs. And there is ſomething inexpreſſibly noble and ſublime in the account which is given us of the glory of that day, when the ſaints ſhall be put in full poſſeſſion of their heavenly inheritance, and ſo ſhall continue to all eternity.

(*r*) Luke xxiii. 46.

(*s*) Acts vii. 49.

(*t*) Phil. i. 23.

(*u*) 2 Cor. v. 6, 7, 8.

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Any one that impartially conſiders this account of future happineſs brought to us by the Revelation of Jeſus Chriſt, will ſee the greateſt reaſon to adore the Divine Goodneſs, which hath favoured us with ſuch glorious diſcoveries. There is nothing in this account, when once it is revealed, but what is worthy of God, and what right reaſon duly exerciſed will approve, yet it is what it could not have diſcovered with any certainty by its own unaſſiſted force. Men of fine imaginations might form pleaſing conjectures concerning the happineſs of a future ſtate, in ſome inſtances nearly reſembling the accounts given in the Goſpel; but they could at beſt have paſſed for no more than agreeable viſions of fancy, which could not yield any ſolid aſſurance or conviction to the mind. And indeed, how could any man pretend, by the force of his own reaſon, without the aſſiſtance of Divine Revelation, to explore the ſecrets of the inviſible world, or take upon him to determine with certainty, in what manner or degree the Supreme Lord of the univerſe will, in a future ſtate, reward the ſincere though imperfect obedience of his frail creatures here on earth? This depends upon the councils of his own infinite wiſdom, and unobliged grace and goodneſs, which ſuch ſhort-ſighted creatures as we are cannot pretend certainly to know, except he himſelf ſhould declare his will and purpoſe concerning it.

No doubt the goodneſs of God, of which there are many proofs in the courſe of his providence in this preſent world, might adminiſter grounds of comfort on ſuppoſition of a future ſtate. But then it is not his goodneſs alone which is to be conſidered, but his wiſdom and governing juſtice too. Let us ſuppoſe him never

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ſo good, yet if we believe him to be alſo perfectly wiſe and juſt, and to have a ſacred regard to the authority of his government and laws, and are at the ſame time ſenſible that we have in many inſtances tranſgreſſed his holy laws, and acted contrary to the duty he requireth of us, might we not have juſt reaſon to apprehend the awful effects of his righteous diſpleaſure? Or, to make the moſt favourable ſuppoſition, upon what ground could we hope that he would raiſe us to a complete eternal felicity in a future ſtate, as the reward of our imperfect obedience in this, when we could not have pretended to lay claim to ſuch a reward as ſtrictly due to us in a way of merit, even though we had perfectly obeyed, and never in any one inſtance fallen ſhort of our duty? But if it ſhould pleaſe God to make an expreſs declaration of his gracious purpoſe to pardon all our iniquities, upon our turning to him by a true repentance and humble faith, and to crown our ſincere perſevering obedience, though not abſolutely ſinleſs, or free from failures and defects, with the glorious reward of eternal life, this would lay a juſt foundation for a divine hope and joy. And this is our unſpeakable comfort and privilege under the Goſpel Revelation.

And what mightily recommends the diſcoveries there made to us of future rewards, is, that they are not confined to a few perſons of diſtinguiſhed eminence. The Goſpel-promiſes extend to all righteous, holy, and virtuous perſons, of whatſoever condition or degree, of whatſoever tribe or tongue, or family or nation. It is true, that it is plainly intimated in the New Teſtament, that there ſhall be different degrees of glory among the bleſſed above, in a wiſe and fit proportion to the different degrees of their holineſs

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and uſefulneſs here on earth (*x*). But yet the happineſs ſhall be complete in all, according to their different meaſures and degrees; all ſhall be perfectly pleaſed and ſatisfied, and admitted to thoſe holy beatifying exerciſes and enjoyments, which tend to the true felicity of their nature. Our Saviour declares concerning all the "righteous" in general, that they ſhall "go into life eternal (*y*)." We are aſſured, that unto them that by a "patient continuance in "well-doing ſeek for glory, honour, and immortality," whatever their outward condition and circumſtances may be here on earth, whether they be high or low, rich or poor, learned or unlearned, God will give "eternal life.—Glory, honour, and peace to every "man that worketh good, to the Jew firſt, and alſo to the "Gentile (*z*)." Thus our Saviour in the parable repreſents Lazarus, who was a good man, but reduced to the loweſt degree of poverty, as carried at his death by angels into Abraham's boſom (*a*). And St. James tells us, that "God hath choſen the poor "of this world, rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom, which he "hath prepared for them that love him (*b*)." Chriſt is ſaid to be "the author of eternal ſalvation unto all them that obey him (*c*)." Not the meaneſt of the human race ſhall be excluded from that heavenly felicity, if they go on in the practice of real piety and

(*x*) Luke xix. 16—20.

(*y*) Matt. xxv. 46.

(*z*) Rom. ii. 2. 10.

(*a*) Luke xvi. 22.

(*b*) Jam. ii. 5.

(*c*) Heb. v. 9.

virtue, and ſerve God with ſimplicity and godly ſincerity, in the ſtation and circumſtances in which his providence hath placed them.

And now how juſtly may it be ſaid, that our Lord Jeſus Chriſt hath brought life and immortality to light by the Goſpel! and what a glorious ſcene doth this open to us! What a ſource of ſpiritual and divine joy, amidſt all the adverſities and tribulations of this preſent ſtate! For the "ſufferings of this preſent time "are not worthy to be compared with the glory which ſhall be "revealed in us (*d*)!" It hath alſo a manifeſt tendency to form us to a true greatneſs of mind, a noble and god-like temper. He that has a ſtedfaſt hope of that future glory and happineſs, will be able to look down with a ſuperior contempt on all thoſe ſhort-lived worldly advantages which are the uſual objects of ambition and avarice, and by which men are ſo often tempted to act contrary to the rules of truth and juſtice, generous honeſty and fidelity. The impure allurements of ſenſual pleaſure will have but ſmall influence upon him that has ſuch glorious hopes and views. Nor will the fear of reproaches, perſecutions, pain, and death, be able to deter him from his duty.

In ſum, nothing can have a greater tendency than the Goſpel-promiſe of eternal life, where it is heartily believed and duly conſidered, to animate us to a perſevering conſtancy and progreſs in the ways of holineſs and virtue, notwithſtanding the difficulties

(*d*) Rom viii 18.

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and diſcouragements we may meet with in this preſent ſtate. It is far from arguing a mean and mercenary temper to have ſuch a reward in view, as the Goſpel repreſents that future happineſs to be. On the contrary, to aſpire after it, is to aſpire to the true perfection of our nature, to a ſtate of conſummate goodneſs and purity, and to the neareſt conformity to God himſelf, the ſupreme original excellence. It may therefore be juſtly ſaid, that the diſcovery that is made to us in the Goſpel of a bleſſed immortality, and of the way that leads to it, and the terms upon which it is to be obtained, is of ſuch vaſt importance, that all the wealth of this world is not to be compared with it.

But it is proper farther to obſerve, that the doctrine of a future ſtate includes not only that of future rewards, or the happineſs prepared for good men in the world to come; but of the puniſhments which ſhall be inflicted upon the wicked. And indeed the latter ſeem no leſs neceſſary in the courſe of the divine adminiſtrations than the former. What confuſion and diſorder would follow, if vice and wickedneſs were ſuffered to ravage without controul? To what purpoſe would it be to make laws, if thoſe laws were left without authority? And what authority could laws have without ſanctions of puniſhments againſt the tranſgreſſors? To ſay, with ſome of the antient philoſophers, that vice is itſelf its own puniſhment, and that there needs no other, ſeems to be a plauſible way of talking. But thoſe muſt know little of the world or of mankind, who think this alone would be a ſufficient reſtraint. At that rate legiſlators and governors would have nothing more to do than to repreſent to the people the turpitude and deformity of

fraud, injuſtice, violence, debauchery, and intemperance, and then ſuffer them to act as they pleaſe. But what ſhould we think of the wiſdom of any government, that ſhould content itſelf with enacting good laws, without any other ſanctions, than the leaving men to the natural conſequences of their own actions? In all well-policied ſtates, where-ever there have been laws, it has been judged neceſſary to enforce the obſervance of them with ſanctions of poſitive penalties againſt the violaters of thoſe laws (*e*). But after all, civil penalties can reach no farther than to the outward actions and behaviour: they can at beſt only reſtrain open acts of wickedneſs. But if bad men have nothing farther to fear than the penalties of human laws, theſe can have no influence to prevent their giving way to ſinful thoughts, affections, and diſpoſitions, which do not properly come within the reach of human judicatories, or to hinder them from committing the greateſt wickedneſs in ſecret, when they flatter themſelves that they ſhall eſcape detection, or that by fraud, bribery, intereſt, or power, they ſhall avoid the judgments of earthly tribunals. Or, if their crimes ſhould expoſe them to death, they may deſpiſe the penalty, if death be all they have to fear, and they have nothing to apprehend after it. But if, beſides all this, they ſhould really believe, that there is a ſupreme governor and judge, of infinite power, wiſdom, and juſtice, who knoweth all their actions, and even their moſt ſecret intentions and thoughts, and will call them to a

(*e*) The Chineſe philoſophers talk much of the natural rewards and puniſhments of virtue and vice. But they are far from truſting to this, as ſufficient to deter evil-doers, and to preſerve good order in the ſtate. No-where are the puniſhments inflicted on thoſe that violate the laws more ſevere and rigorous.

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ſtrict account; and that the penalties of human laws and governments are far from being the worſt they have to fear, but that much greater puniſhments are prepared for them in a future ſtate, this, if really believed, muſt needs have a mighty influence to ſtem the violence of their vicious appetites and paſſions, and to awaken them to ſerious thoughts, which might put them in the way of better impreſſions. Human laws and penalties will be found too weak to reſtrain men, where there is no fear of God before their eyes, nor regard to a future ſtate, and the powers of the world to come.

It has been already ſhewn, that the wiſeſt men among the Pagans were ſenſible, that it was neceſſary for the advantage of ſociety, that the people ſhould believe the puniſhments of a future ſtate (*f*). And yet certain it is, that at the time of our Saviour's coming the fear of thoſe puniſhments was in a great meaſure loſt among men. This was very much owing to the libertine principles of the great men, and even of the philoſophers, which

(*f*) The ingenious Mr. Hume, whom no man will ſuſpect of being governed by religious prejudices, ſpeaking of the nations, " That the Deity will inflict puniſh-" ments on vice, and confer infinite rewards on virtue," ſays, That " thoſe who " attempt to diſabuſe them of ſuch prejudices, may, for aught he knows, be " good reaſoners, but that he cannot allow them to be good citizens and politi-" cians, ſince they free men from one reſtraint upon their paſſions, and make the " infringment of the laws of equity and ſociety in one reſpect more eaſy and ſecure." Hume's Philoſophical Eſſays, p. 231. And Lord Bolingbroke obſerves, That " the doctrine of rewards and puniſhments in a future ſtate has ſo great a tendency " to enforce the civil laws, and to reſtrain the vices of men, that reaſon, which (as he pretends) " cannot decide for it on principles of natural theology, will not " decide againſt it on principles of good policy." See his Works, Vol. V. p. 322. edit. 4to.

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spread among the people. And this may well be regarded as one principal cause of that amazing licentiousness, which then prevailed among the Greeks and Romans, the most knowing and civilized of the Heathen nations.

To awaken men therefore to a sense of the divine judgments, and to restore the fear of God, which was almost banished out of the world, was a matter of great importance. And accordingly, when it pleased God to send his own Son to make a new and solemn publication of his laws to mankind, and also to make a clear discovery of eternal life, as the glorious reward of their sincere and dutiful obedience, nothing could be more proper and necessary, than that he should at the same time denounce the most awful punishments against those that should persist in a presumptuous course of vice and wickedness. The Gospel therefore not only exhibited the most glorious discoveries of the divine grace and mercy that were ever made to mankind, but the wrath of God is there revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men. And this is no less necessary in a Revelation designed for common use than the former.

Whosoever impartially considers the discourses of our Lord Jesus Christ, as recorded by the Evangelists, will find that this most amiable and benevolent Saviour, who came to call sinners to repentance, and display all the charms of the divine love and goodness to invite them to forsake their evil ways, and to come to him for happiness, doth also represent in the most striking manner the just vengeance which shall be inflicted on obstinate

impenitent offenders. And in this he was faithfully followed by the apoſtles, who were animated by his divine ſpirit, and publiſhed his Goſpel to the world. Nothing can poſſibly exceed the account that is given of the awful ſolemnity of the future judgment, " when the ſecrets of all hearts ſhall be revealed, and every man " ſhall receive according to the things done in the body, whe- " ther good or evil." The puniſhments to be inflicted on the wicked in a future ſtate are deſcribed in the moſt ſtrong and ardent expreſſions, and in a manner fitted to ſtrike the minds of the moſt hardened ſinners with terror and amazement, to awaken them, if poſſible, to a ſenſe of their guilt and danger. The deſcriptions are general, and it is wiſely ordered, that they ſhould be ſo: but the deſign is not to inſinuate that all bad men ſhall be puniſhed with an equal degree of ſeverity. There are ſeveral paſſages from which it appears, that there ſhall be a great difference made between ſome and others: that ſome, as our Saviour ſpeaks, " ſhall be beaten with many ſtripes," others comparatively " with few:" that even amongſt heinous offenders it ſhall be more tolerable for ſome than for others in the day of judgment, according to the different aggravations of their crimes. We are no where informed what ſhall be the leaſt degree of puniſhment which ſhall be inflicted. Such a diſcovery is no way neceſſary, and would probably be abuſed. But this we are ſure of, that no man ſhall be puniſhed above the real demerit of his crimes. Infinite Grace and Goodneſs may confer a glory and felicity upon good men above what they could have pretended to claim as ſtrictly due to them. But a juſt and wiſe and good God will never inflict a puniſhment upon ſinners greater than their ſins really

really deserve. And of this certainly he must be acknowledged to be the properest judge. Our wisest way is not to endeavour to diminish the evil of sin to ourselves, or to make exceptions against the punishments as too rigorous and severe, but to guard against those evil courses which would expose us to the threatened penalties. What St. Paul saith of human laws and governors, holds proportionably true of the divine: "Rulers are not a terror "to good works, but to the evil. Wilt thou not be afraid of "the power? Do that which is good, and thou shalt have "praise of the same (*g*)." The divine threatenings as well as promises; proceed from the Supreme Wisdom and Goodness, as well as Righteousness and Justice. The original intention of promulgating these threatenings, is not that they may be executed, but that the execution of them may be prevented: it is to hinder us from destroying ourselves, and persisting in those sinful courses which will end in misery and ruin. The design of all is to promote the universal good, and to maintain the peace, order, and harmony of the moral world. Turn thou from those evil practices, which, if there were no threatenings against them, thou oughtest to avoid from a regard to the will of God, and to the true perfection, dignity, and happiness of thy own nature, and thou needest not to fear those threatenings, but hast glory and immortality before thee. But if, notwithstanding all the warnings that are given us, we will still go on in the way which leadeth to destruction, and for a little present worldly gain, or the gratifications of a vicious appetite, forfeit eternal glory, and run the hazard of

(*g*) Rom. xiii. 3.

the

the greateſt miſery in a future ſtate, what can it be charged upon but our own inexcuſable guilt and folly?

Thoſe, therefore, who make the doctrine of future puniſhments an objection againſt Chriſtianity, act a very unreaſonable part. If the Goſpel ſpoke only ſmooth things, peace to the wicked, the vicious, and the profligate, it might indeed pleaſe the corrupt part of mankind, who are deſirous to give a full indulgence to their exorbitant luſts and appetites, but it would be of the worſt conſequence to the cauſe of virtue, piety, and righteouſneſs, and would furniſh an unanſwerable objection againſt the truth and divinity of the Chriſtian Revelation. If it be ſo hard, with all the threatenings and reſtraints that can be laid upon men, to keep them within any tolerable bounds, what would it be if thoſe reſtraints ſhould be removed? I do not ſee upon what foundation thoſe can pretend to be friends to their country and to mankind, who at the ſame time that they endeavour to deprive good men of thoſe hopes of future happineſs, which are the moſt powerful ſupports of virtue, and the greateſt comfort of their lives, take pains to ſet wicked men looſe from the fears of future puniſhment, when we find by experience, that all is little enough to ſtem the torrent of prevailing corruption.

THE CONCLUSION.

I Have now gone through what I intended, and ſhall conclude with a few obſervations upon the whole.

1. We may hence ſee, that reaſon, if left merely to itſelf in the preſent ſtate of mankind, is not a ſafe and certain guide in matters of religion. The proof which hath been given of this from fact and experience is of the greateſt weight. We have not proceeded in this inquiry upon ſpeculative notions of what human reaſon might be ſuppoſed to be capable of attaining to by its own unaſſiſted force, but have endeavoured to form the judgment of what may be expected from it, from what it has actually done. And we have conſidered it not merely as it has been found among the vulgar, but as it has appeared among the greateſt maſters of reaſon in the Pagan world. And the concluſion this will lead us to will, I am afraid, be different from that which a learned and ingenious author has drawn from the repreſentation he has given of the ſtate of the Heathen world, with reſpect to the points we have been conſidering. " From hence (ſays he) it will follow, " that the light of reaſon is not that uncertain, weak, inſufficient, " inconſiſtent thing, that is by ſome pretended, nor ought it to " be treated as ſomething carnal and dim (*b*)." That reaſon has

(*b*) See Dr. Sykes's Principles and Connection of Natural and Revealed Religion, p. 357, 358.

done

done and may do great things, when duly exercised, and under a proper guidance, I readily allow; and that it may be of signal use for defending and confirming sacred truth, and detecting superstition and error, in opposition to the frauds and impositions of designing men. Reason is a valuable gift of God, and it highly concerneth us to endeavour to improve and not to abuse it. Nor is any thing to be admitted that is contrary to its plain and evident dictates. But it was never designed to be our only guide exclusive of Divine Revelation. And if we must judge from experience, we shall not be apt to form a very advantageous idea of the powers of human reason, when trusting to its own perspicacity in things spiritual and divine without a higher assistance (*i*). It was therefore a great instance of the wisdom and goodness of God towards mankind, that he favoured them with the light of Divine Revelation from the beginning of the world, which, if carefully

(*i*) It is a just observation of Lord Bacon, that "the only cause and root of "almost all errors in the sciences is this, that whilst we falsly admire the force "and abilities of the human mind, we do not seek out the true and proper assist- "ances for it."—"Causa et radix ferè omnium malorum in scientiis, ea una est, "quòd dum mentis humanæ vires falsò miramur, vera ejus auxilia non quæra- "mus *." What that great man seems here to have had particularly in view, is, that philosophers in all ages, from a too high opinion of the force and extent of their own genius, have been apt to depend upon schemes and hypotheses of their own framing, without a due attention to experiments, and those helps which might have led them to a better knowledge of the nature of things. In like manner, it has often happened that through an overweening conceit of the strength of their own powers, men have neglected and despised the helps afforded them by Divine Revelation; or they have not kept close to its instructions, but have attempted to be wise above that which is written; "intruding into things which "they have not seen, vainly puffed up by their fleshly minds," as the apostle speaks, Col. ii. 18.

* Bacon. Nov. Organ. Scientiar. aphor. 9.

adhered to, and duly improved, would have been of the moſt ſignal uſe. And afterwards he was graciouſly pleaſed to interpoſe by renewed diſcoveries of his will, for recovering mankind from their darkneſs and corruption to the right knowledge and practice of important truth and duty. And if, notwithſtanding theſe advantages, men have generally fallen from the knowledge of God and true religion, and have corrupted it with groſs ſuperſtitions and idolatries, this is no argument that Revelation is of no uſe or ſignificancy. On the contrary, it furniſheth a convincing proof of the weakneſs of human reaſon in the preſent depraved ſtate of mankind; and we may juſtly conclude, that if, even with the helps it has received from Divine Revelation, it is ſtill ſo prone to fall into error in matters of great importance, much more would it be apt to lead men aſtray, if left entirely deſtitute of that aſſiſtance.

This leads me to obſerve,

2dly, That we ſhould ſet a high value on the Goſpel of Jeſus, which is the perfection of all the divine revelations that have been given to mankind, and to which the ſeveral prior revelations were deſigned to be preparatory. It has every thing in it that is neceſſary for guiding men in the way of ſalvation. The idea there given us of the Deity is the moſt worthy and ſublime that can be imagined, admirably fitted to fill us with the higheſt love to God, and the moſt thankful admiration of his infinite grace and goodneſs, and at the ſame time with the moſt awful veneration of his unchangeable righteouſneſs, juſtice, and purity. The Goſpel diſcoveries

coveries have alſo a manifeſt tendency to beget in us an ingenuous truſt and confidence in him, and to encourage us to draw near to him with an humble freedom, through that great Mediator, who by his wiſe and ſovereign appointment hath made expiation for our ſins, and obtained eternal redemption for us.

Again, nothing can be more holy and excellent than the laws and precepts which are there given us. Our duty is ſet before us in its juſt extent. Morality is carried to its nobleſt height, without running into extravagancies or unnatural extremes. The deſign of all its precepts, doctrines, and ordinances, is to form us by a life of holineſs and virtue here, for a ſtate of perfect goodneſs and purity in a better world. The motives which are propoſed to animate us to obedience, are the moſt powerful that can be imagined, drawn from the charms of the divine love and goodneſs, and from a regard to our own higheſt intereſt and happineſs: we are raiſed to the moſt glorious privileges and ſublime hopes, and have the moſt perfect and lovely example of the Son of God in our nature propoſed to our imitation. Beſides which, the gracious aſſiſtances of the Holy Spirit are promiſed and provided. And finally, eternal life is brought into the moſt clear and open light. The moſt raviſhing diſcoveries are made of that everlaſting happineſs and glory which is prepared for good men in the heavenly ſtate. And that nothing might be wanting to render the Revelation complete for moral purpoſes, as the glad tidings of pardon and ſalvation are publiſhed to penitent returning ſinners, who forſake their evil ways, and yield themſelves unto God in ſincere and dutiful obedience;

ſo

ſo on the other hand the awful ſolemnities of the future judgment are there alſo diſplayed in the moſt ſtriking manner, and dreadful puniſhments are denounced againſt thoſe who reject offered mercy, and obſtinately perſiſt in vice and wickedneſs.

This leads to another obſervation proper to be made on this occaſion; and that is, that Chriſtianity duly believed and practiſed tends to the advantage of ſociety, to promote the welfare of kingdoms and ſtates, and to preſerve good order in the world. If men followed the ſacred precepts and directions it gives, what a happy world this would be! Impartial juſtice, generous honeſty, exact fidelity, extenſive benevolence, and a peaceful harmony and concord would generally prevail. The irregular paſſions and ſenſual affections would be brought under a due ſubjection to religion and reaſon; every one would be content in his ſtation, and diligent in performing the duties of it. The ſtate would be as one large family, all united in mutual love, rejoicing in one another's welfare, and deſirous to promote it. Kings, if they were governed by the precepts of Chriſtianity, would act as the fathers of their people: righteouſneſs and judgment, clemency and mercy, would be the ſtability of their throne; rulers ſupreme and ſubordinate would be juſt, ruling in the fear of God. Subjects would be ſubmiſſive and obedient to the higher powers, and render all due allegiance and fidelity for conſcience ſake. The Goſpel, properly attended to, would check and reſtrain the abuſe of liberty, and keep it within proper bounds, that it might not run into licentiouſneſs. Huſbands and wives, parents and children, maſters and

and ſervants, paſtors and their flocks, would fulfil the duties of their ſeveral relations; and a ſtop would be put to that torrent of corruption, that inundation of vice and ſenſuality, which threatens ruin to ſtates and kingdoms, and tends to the utter ſubverſion of all order and good polity.

It cannot be denied, that what has been now mentioned is the natural tendency of the Chriſtian precepts, as laid down in the Holy Scriptures, where-ever this religion is ſincerely believed and embraced. I ſhall on this occaſion ſubjoin the teſtimony of a great author, whom I mentioned before, and who muſt be acknowledged to be a very able judge of theſe matters, and was far from a narrow way of thinking; it is the celebrated M. de Monteſquieu. As, in a paſſage before cited, he extols the morality of the Goſpel, and declares it to be one of the moſt excellent gifts of God to mankind, ſo on another occaſion he takes notice of its good influence conſidered in a political view. Having obſerved that Mr. Bayle takes upon him to affirm, that a ſtate made up of real Chriſtians, acting according to the rules of Chriſtianity, could not ſubſiſt, he aſks, "Why not? The citizens would have a clear knowledge "of their ſeveral duties, and a great zeal to fulfil them: they "would have a juſt notion of the right of natural defence: and "the more they thought they owed to religion, the more ſenſible "they would be of what they owed to their country." He adds, That "the principles of Chriſtianity, deeply engraven upon the "heart, would be of infinitely greater force than the falſe honour "of monarchies, the humane virtues of republics, and the ſervile

"fear

" fear of deſpotic ſtates (*k*)." The ſame author mentions it as " an admirable thing, that the Chriſtian religion, which ſeems to " have for its object only the happineſs of another life, does alſo " make up our happineſs in this (*l*)."

It were eaſy to enlarge upon this laſt obſervation, and ſhew what a tendency the Chriſtian religion has to promote our preſent happineſs, and how vaſtly it contributes to the real ſatisfaction of life. Its admirable precepts, when duly practiſed, lay a foundation for inward tranquillity, peace, and ſelf-enjoyment. Even thoſe of its precepts, which ſeem moſt harſh and grievous to the ſenſual appetites and paſſions, manifeſtly tend to the true perfection and felicity of our nature, and to recover the ſoul from its ignominious ſervitude to vicious luſts, to a noble ſpiritual and moral liberty. It doth not impoſe upon us any of thoſe unnatural hardſhips and ſeverities which ſuperſtition hath often laid upon its votaries: nor doth it forbid any pleaſures, but what are baſe and vicious in their nature, or exceſſive in their degree. It directs and aſſiſts us in the true enjoyment of the bleſſings of Providence with a moſt thankful ſenſe of the Divine Goodneſs.

(*k*) " Ce ſeroient des citoyens infiniment eclairés ſur leurs devoirs, et qui au- " roient un tres grand zele pour les remplir: ils ſentiroient tres bien les droits de la " defence naturelle: plus ils croiroient devoir a la religion, plus ils penſeroient de- " voir a la patrie. Les principes du Chriſtianiſme bien gravés dans le coeur ſeroient " infiniment plus forts, que ce faux honneur des monarchies, ces vertus humaines " des republiques, et cette crainte ſervile des etats deſpotiques." De l'Eſprit des Loix, tome II. livre xxiv. chap. 6. p. 154. edit. Edinb. See alſo to the ſame purpoſe, ibid. chap. 3. p. 152.

(*l*) " Choſe admirable! la religion Chretienne, qui ne ſemble avoir d'objet que " la felicité de l'autre vie, fait encore notre bonheur dans celle-ci." Ibid. p. 151.

And

And its glorious promiſes and ſublime hopes open the way for us to pleaſures of a ſtill nobler and ſublimer nature, the happy prelibations of inviſible and immortal joys.

The deſign I had in view has led me chiefly to conſider thoſe principles and duties which are uſually looked upon as comprehended in what is called natural religion, and which are in ſome degree diſcoverable by human reaſon. And it has been ſhewn, that in fact, through the corruption of mankind, theſe principles and duties were ſo perverted and obſcured as to render an extraordinary Revelation from God highly needful, for ſetting them in the moſt convincing light, and enforcing them by a divine authority. It appears from what has been obſerved, that the Chriſtian Revelation has done this to the greateſt advantage. And if we ſhould proceed farther to a particular conſideration of thoſe more peculiar doctrines of Chriſtianity, which reaſon could not at all have diſcovered if they had not been revealed, eſpecially thoſe relating to the methods of our redemption through Jeſus Chriſt, here a glorious ſcene would open to us, fitted to fill our minds with the higheſt admiration of the divine wiſdom and righteouſneſs, and love to mankind. Chriſtianity, conſidered in this view, is a diſpenſation of grace and joy, and hath brought the beſt, the happieſt tidings that were ever publiſhed to the world. But I have already far exceeded the bounds I originally intended, and therefore ſhall, without farther enlargement, conclude with obſerving, that we, who have the benefit of the Goſpel Revelation, are under indiſpenſable obligations to endeavour to make a good

uſe of our advantages, and to receive with the greateſt veneration and thankfulneſs the glorious diſcoveries it brings. We ſhould be grateful to Divine Providence for the other advantages we enjoy, for our trade and commerce, for the flouriſhing of arts and ſciences among us, and for the enjoyment of civil liberty. But the moſt valuable of all our privileges is, that we have the Holy Scriptures in our hands, and the Chriſtian Revelation clearly publiſhed amongſt us, which hath inſtructed us in the right knowledge of the Deity, hath ſet our duty before us in its juſt extent, and furniſhed the nobleſt motives and aſſiſtances for the performance of it, and hath raiſed us to ſuch ſublime hopes of a complete eternal felicity. Surely this calls in a particular manner for our adoring thankfulneſs to God, to whoſe rich grace and mercy we owe it that we are called out of darkneſs into his marvellous light. It is aſtoniſhing to think, that there ſhould be perſons found among us, who ſeem deſirous to extinguiſh this glorious light, and to return to the antient darkneſs of Paganiſm again: who ſeem weary of the Goſpel, and with a prepoſterous zeal endeavour to ſubvert its proofs and evidences, and to expoſe it, as far as in them lies, to the deriſion and contempt of mankind. But the attempts of ſuch men againſt our holy religion ſhould only quicken our zeal and heighten our eſteem for it, and make us more earneſtly deſirous to build up ourſelves in our moſt holy faith, and to adorn it by an exemplary converſation becoming the Goſpel of Chriſt. Chriſtianity is not a bare ſyſtem of ſpeculative opinions, but a practical inſtitution, a ſpiritual and heavenly diſcipline, all whoſe doctrines, precepts, promiſes, and ordinances,

ordinances, are deſigned to form men to a holy and virtuous temper and practice. The moſt effectual way, therefore, we can take to promote its ſacred intereſts, is to ſhew the happy influence it hath upon our own hearts and lives, by abounding in the fruits of piety, righteouſneſs, and charity, and thus making an amiable repreſentation of it to the world.

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SECOND VOLUME.

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Tranſmigration of ſouls—taught by the Egyptians, who repreſented it as the effect of a phyſical neceſſity, yet applied it to moral purpoſes, 337. It was maintained by all the philoſophers who taught the immortality of the ſoul, 373. It was a great corruption of the doctrine of a future ſtate of retributions, and tended to weaken and defeat the good effects of it, 374.

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Z.

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FINIS.